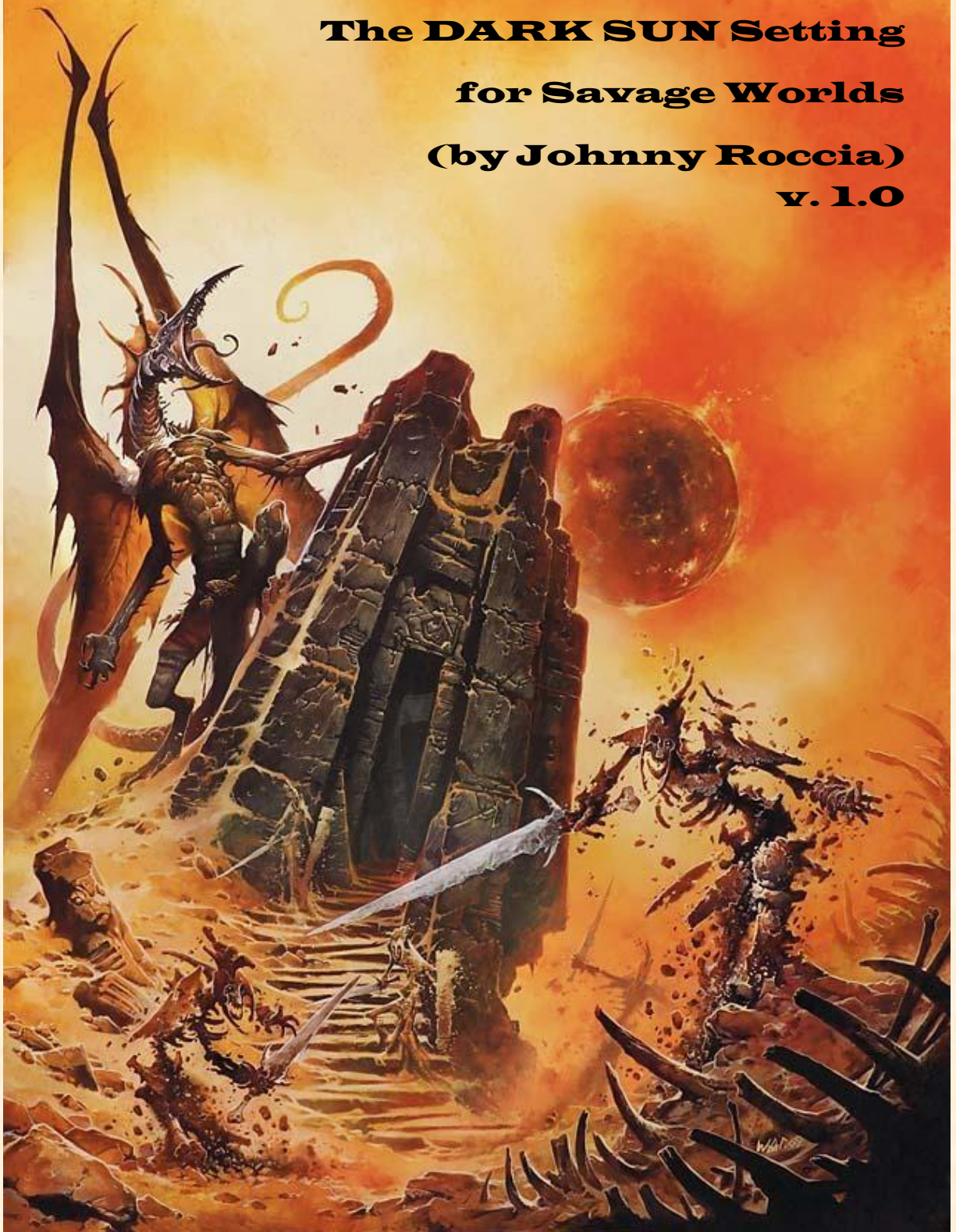


SAVAGE SUN

**The DARK SUN Setting
for Savage Worlds
(by Johnny Roccia)
v. 1.0**



SAVAGE SUN

WELCOME TO ATHAS

The endless wastes. The burning sand. The crimson sun. This is the world of the Savage Sun campaign setting, an adaptation of the Dark Sun setting for Savage Worlds. Athas's savage, primal landscape is the result of long centuries of ecological and magical abuses. The world is dying. It breathes its last gasps as water turns to silt, grasslands become sandy wastes, and jungles decay into stony barrens. Still, life finds a way to endure even in these hellish conditions.

Athas is a place of contrasts. Bleak deserts exist beside verdant belts, rocky badlands give way to thick forests, and scrub plains surround opulent oases. These contrasts go beyond environmental conditions. Magic, for example, is relatively scarce and universally feared, while psionic powers are a common and accepted part of life.

Water is more precious than gold in this resource-depleted world, and metals of all sort are likewise in short supply. Except for heat and sun, blood and dust, few things can be found in abundance.

Children growing up beneath the crimson sun don't aspire to become heroes. True heroes who champion causes or seek to make the world a better place are as rare as steel on Athas. Living to see the next dawn is more important than defending a set of beliefs, so survival ultimately motivates all living creatures – not virtue or righteousness.

But heroes are desperately needed in this harsh, savage land...

The Setting

The Tyr region is one of the few places on Athas that sustains any life at all. While still a brutal desert, it at least has some pockets of oases and the bare necessities to support life. Those places most agreeable to life are the City-States; isolated kingdoms ruled by the immortal Sorcerer-Kings. The ageless and vastly powerful Sorcerer-Kings are the dominant force behind culture and politics in the Tyr region; no creature other than the singular Dragon of Tyr is more powerful or feared than they. The cultures of each unique city-state are shaped by the nature of their Sorcerer-Kings, and these brutal dictators hold their citizens under their heels with the might of their Templar, their armies, and their deadly magics.

Life does exist outside of the City-States, though it is frequently nasty, brutish and short. Even outside the walls of the Sorcerer-Kings' domains, their influence can be felt in the wars they fight, the slaves they capture, the resources they devour and even the scars on the very land left behind by their life-draining magic.

A variety of different races compete for survival against the relentless oppression of the desert. Nearly every creature is predatory and dangerous in the extreme, mutating in an evolutionary arms race as they compete for the scarce resources needed for survival. The enormous, crimson sun bakes the land to temperatures as high as 150 degrees during the day. The twin moons of Ral and Guthay offer light but no warmth during the frigid nights, as the lack of humidity retains no heat, plunging the night into near-freezing temperatures.

The world has bronze-age technology at best in most places. Workable metal is as rare as those that know how to work it, so a metal weapon is something the average person never sees in their lifetime. Even good wood is scarce; weapons and tools are more likely to be made of shell, bone or chitin.

Athas is a world without gods. The Sorcerer-Kings reign supreme and are worshipped as living deities, but outside of the City-States there are druids who worship the spirits of the land and Elemental Clerics that worship the very powers of Earth, Wind, Water and Fire exist as well. These shamans sometimes protect small tribes, but just as often they have more inscrutable ends.

Arcane Magic exists, but its nature on Athas is very different. Arcane magic draws its power from the very living plants of the world, turning them to ash to fuel its wonders. Defiling, as it is called, is one of the most universally hated acts on the planet. Outside of the City-States, resources are so scarce that ruining them with Defiling is seen as an unforgivable sin, and within the City-States, it's punishable by death – not only for ruining resources, but because the Sorcerer-Kings (the most powerful Defilers in existence) wish to maintain their monopoly. There are some magic users called Preservers who work the same magic but do so carefully so as to not destroy life, though the distinction is lost on most average people. A group of rebel Preservers and their allies known as the Veiled Alliance actively work to undermine the Sorcerer-Kings, but it's a dangerous existence.

Athas is a psionic world. Huge numbers of living creatures have some measure of psionic ability, and some people master The Way (as it is called) to incredible power. While arcane magic is hated and even spiritual paths like druids and elemental clerics are mistrusted, psionics are simply a way of life.

Athas is also a world of vast class divide. There are noble castes within the City-States that have curried the favor of the Sorcerer-Kings and their Templar and who own great tracts of land, vast resources, and armies of slaves – and then there's everyone else. Whether a slave or freeman, if you aren't of the noble class you live in desperate poverty, barely scraping out a subsistence. The one exception – those that are neither poor nor noble – are the great merchant houses. Because of the isolation and hostility between most City-States, organized Merchant Houses have found a unique niche in the world, moving the needed goods between islands of civilization across the dangerous desert at a tidy profit to themselves. Owing fealty to no nation, these houses represent a political power all their own and are fiercely competitive.

One final note on a cultural touchstone that impacts nearly every sentient life in the Tyr region – the arena. Gladiatorial combat is the chief form of entertainment, the chief punishment, and the chief industry of most city-states. The arena and its Gladiators are as much a part of Athas as the desert itself.

SAVAGE SUN

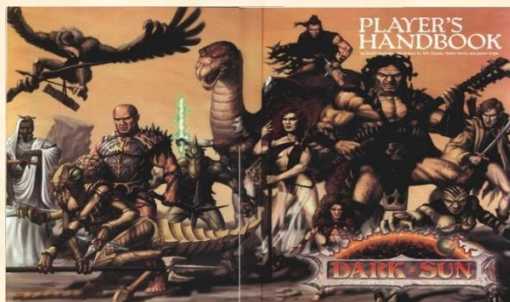
SETTING RULES

This setting uses the **Creative Combat**, **Dynamic Backlash**, **Gritty Damage**, and **Multiple Languages** Setting Rules, plus the following new setting rules.

Dangerous World

Special Modifications for Certain Core Game Rules:

- **Heat Hazard:** Temperatures on Athas generally start at 100 degrees at the earliest light of dawn, and routinely reach ranges of 130 to 150 degrees during the afternoon. The sun is so severe that during the day, the heat always counts as “extreme,” with penalties ranging from -2 (on good days) to -4. *During combat, a character must roll against the Heat hazard any time their Action Card is a Heart!*
- **Thirst Hazard:** The extreme heat and dryness means that humanoid creatures require a gallon of water a day, unless their racial description says otherwise. Every point of Size above 0 doubles this requirement, and every point of Size below 0 halves it (so Halflings require half a gallon per day, but Thri-Kreen require 2 gallons, and Half-Giants require 8). If a character ever becomes **Exhausted** from the Thirst Hazard, they must immediately make a Spirit roll (suffering from the Fatigue penalties!) or succumb to *water madness*. If they fail, they gain a random (d6) Hindrance reflecting how the grip of water madness affects their actions. This Hindrance lasts until they recover all Fatigue lost to Thirst:
 - **1:** Ruthless (Major)
 - **2:** Bloodthirsty
 - **3:** Vengeful (Major)
 - **4:** Delusional (Major)
 - **5:** Greedy (Major)
 - **6:** Impulsive
- **Encumbrance:** A gallon of water weighs 8 pounds. Food is lighter, but still significant – assume a gallon of water plus a day’s minimum food weigh 10 pounds total. Creatures in Savage Sun double their carrying capacity for each Size above 0, and halve it for each Size below 0. So a halfling can only carry half of what a human can, but a half-giant can lift and carry eight times as much.



Depleted Energy

Athas is a world in which supernatural energy is rare and precious. The dying husk does not yield such energies without great sacrifice and effort. In this setting, **Shorting** is unavailable and **Bennies** may *not* be used to **Regain Power Points**. In addition, recharging Power Points itself is more difficult; in order to recover Power Points the hero must engage in an hour of worship rituals (for Templar, Clerics, and Druids), meditation (for Psionicists), or drawing power from the land (for Preservers and Defilers). Regardless of the type of activity, it must be stationary and absorbs all of the hero's attention and focus. They cannot do anything else (not even converse or sleep) during this time or the hour is interrupted and must begin again.

Powerful Heroes

Player Characters on Athas get 6 points to increase their attributes at character creation rather than 5. In addition, characters start with 4 Advances, putting them at Seasoned Rank. The brutal crucible that is Athas forces its denizens to mature and toughen quickly, or else they won't survive.

Sword & Sorcery

A common theme of the setting is that of men and women with nothing but their strength and wit standing toe-to-toe against foes with great supernatural power. Any player character without an Arcane Background gets +1 to Parry, +1 to Toughness, and a Combat Edge of choice (the character must still meet prerequisites for this Edge). The benefits are lost if the character takes an Arcane Background.

Multiple Languages

The various cultures of Athas have a variety of spoken languages. Though each tribe has their own dialects, there are broad categories of languages that one can learn in order to navigate the intricacies of local speech. Player characters in Savage Sun start knowing their own language at a d8, as well as a number of additional languages equal to half their Smarts die at a d6 each. Note that you use whichever skill is lowest when performing an action that requires knowledge of a foreign language. Intimidation (if verbal), Persuasion, Research, Taunt, etc., are all limited by the character's Language skill. The primary languages of Athas include:

- Aarakocra
- Dwarven
- Elven
- Giant
- Halfling
- Human
- Pterran
- Trade Tongue
- Kreen (cannot be learned)
- Balican (Balic)
- Draji (Draj)
- Gulganese (Gulg)
- Nibenese (Nibenay)
- Raamin (Raam)
- Tyrian (Tyr)
- Urish (Urik)
- Tribal Languages (each species has their own, learned separately)

New Uses for Old Skills

Many skills from Savage Worlds have expanded or alternate uses in Savage Sun, while other skills are absent entirely. If a skill is not listed here, it is unchanged from the core rules.

ACADEMICS: This skill includes civics, law, history, bureaucracy, and other higher pursuits of the elite classes. Given the generally low levels of literacy among the non-elite, it is quite uncommon but extremely useful.

BATTLE: In addition to its other uses, Battle has several new applications in Savage Sun:

- **Siege Warfare:** Battle is the skill used to fire siege weapons like catapults.
- Battle can be used as a Support roll and to Test during combat, reflecting superior tactical knowledge.
- **Evaluate Conditions:** Whenever a battle happens in odd or unusual circumstances (such as strange terrain, or in gladiatorial matches with unique rules), a Battle roll will give the tactician insight as to obvious pitfalls to avoid or ideas on how best to proceed.

BOATING: The only “boats” anywhere on Athas are the Silt Skimmers used on the Silt Sea. Therefore, this skill is quite uncommon – but essential in those areas.

DRIVING: Does not exist in Savage Sun.

ELECTRONICS: Does not exist in Savage Sun.

GAMBLING: In addition to normal games of chance and skill, Gambling also reflects a character’s skill at picking winners when betting, especially on gladiatorial bouts. This can be done two ways:

- To abstract a day of betting on smaller, “off-camera” bouts, a single Gambling roll will provide 2d6 ceramic pieces if successful or 3d6 with a raise. A failure means the character has broken even while a Critical Failure means they’ve lost 5d6 ceramic pieces – and trouble brews if they can’t pay!
- To reflect betting on larger events that will happen in the course of the game, the character must declare that they are betting on a particular match in advance and state how much they’re betting, but they don’t yet declare which side they’re backing, nor do they roll yet. Instead, after the match is over they roll to see if they successfully backed the winner. Roll with a -1 penalty if the winner was not favored to begin with, and a -2 penalty if they were a true longshot. If they succeed, they win the amount they bet, or double that on a raise. If they fail they lose their stake, and on a Critical Failure they lose double – with dire consequences if they can’t pay.

HACKING: Does not exist in Savage Sun.

HEALING: Healing is also used to prepare bodies for ritual disposal or various funerary rites, notably those necessary to prevent undeath.



PERSUASION: Persuasion has a new use, an extremely common task on Athas – bribing officials.

- Bribe Officials: The highly stratified society of Athas is filled with various functionaries and authority figures that control the flow of life in the city-states and beyond. Lining their pockets is essential to smoothly navigating daily life, but it can be difficult to master the etiquette involved. Offering too low an amount can be deadly, offering too much can land you in the poor house or make you a target of extortion, and insulting your target can be disastrous. Whenever you wish to bribe an official, roll Persuasion. On a success, the official performs whatever task within their authority you requested; usually something simple like allowing an exception to a rule, ignoring some transgression, or allowing an action without interference (“looking the other way”). A raise is required for the official to take some positive action on their part, such as escorting the character to a new location, handing over documents, etc. The GM is the final arbiter of the cost of the bribe, but the successful roll will always result in the correct, fair amount. If the initial roll fails, the player has two options: they may accept the consequences of failing to bribe the official (which are never simply neutral – in this case, the official has been insulted and will respond with a minimum of a lowered reaction level, possibly worse) or they can reroll by doubling the bribe amount. The second roll must be kept.

Because bribery is so common in Athas,

most officials cannot be “sweet talked” otherwise. They have come to expect bribes for exceptions to their duties, and will often be very insulted if someone attempts to ask a favor for free.

PILOTING: Does not exist in Savage Sun.

REPAIR: In addition to the normal skills, Repair has two other important uses in the resource-poor environment of Athas.

- Patch Weapon: As an action, a character may roll Repair to temporarily make a broken weapon functional – a critical skill in a world where primitive weapons can snap at inopportune moments. The weapon will last until the end of the encounter, at which point it is broken permanently.
- Desert Crafting: Survival on Athas for many people means being able to fashion your own equipment from what you find. With 1d6 hours work and a successful Repair roll, a character can make 5 cp worth of gear or weaponry (double on a raise) or make that much progress toward a more expensive item. In any case, the character may not use this feature again until they move to a new area or gain access to new resources (such as killing a large animal for its carcass, etc.). On a Critical Failure, any in-progress items are destroyed by a crucial mistake.

RESEARCH: There are very few libraries or other sources of information on Athas. Those with access to the temple libraries of the city-states, such as Templar, nobles, or others, could find this skill quite useful in locating ancient maps, references to lost ruins or old curses, or clues to deeper mysteries.

RIDING: Riding also governs the use of beast-drawn vehicles such as chariots and most caravan vehicles as well as the care and feeding of the various mounts and pack animals of Athas, such as the Crodlu, Erdlu, Kank, Inix, and Mekillot.

SCIENCE: Science also covers agriculture, astrology, alchemy, glassblowing, lens crafting, and gem cutting. A successful Science roll and 1d6 days are necessary to create an obsidian orb, focus crystal, or other device important to certain Arcane Backgrounds.

SURVIVAL: Survival can be used to find food as normal in the core rules, but water is not so easy to find in the deserts of Athas:

- **Locate Water:** Few can survive in the deserts of Athas without supplies or away from an oasis. When trying to find water in the open desert, you may roll once for every 4 hours of searching, thus usually requiring a roll against the Heat Hazard (and that roll must be made first). On a success, the character does not find water, but finds “water signs” that give them a +1 to the *next* roll they make to search for water. Only on a raise does the character find *half* of the amount of water a full-size creature needs for each day. On a failure, the character finds nothing. On a Critical Failure, they fall victim to a mirage and find themselves drinking sand – make an immediate Vigor roll against Thirst with a -4 penalty.
- **Heat Protection:** A successful Survival check can better prepare you for the ravages of the sun; get a +1 on Vigor rolls against the Heat hazard, or +2 on a raise, for one day of travel (no bonus during combat).

THIEVERY: Thievery is also used to forge documents, disguise spellcasting, and communicate without words.

- **Forge Documents:** This skill allows a thief to produce false-but-passable forms and documents, including items made of paper and papyrus, stone tablets, signet rings, etc. Success depends on the thief’s skill, his familiarity with the original, and the examiner’s level of scrutiny. A thief attempting to forge a document needs an example of the original on which to base his work. Without such an example, the roll is made with a -2 penalty. On a failure, the document isn’t passable and is beyond the forger’s skill – no further attempts may be made on that document unless a new example is obtained, but at least the thief is aware of the failure. On a Critical Failure, the thief is convinced that the document looks flawless, even though all but the dullest minds will see through it immediately. An examiner may make a Notice roll to detect the forgery. This roll is made at a -2 penalty if the Thievery check to make the falsehood was a raise.
- **Disguise Spellcasting:** A successful Thievery check as an action will disguise the verbal, somatic, and material components of a spell about to be cast (within the next round). The effects of the spell itself will not be disguised, but the source will not be obvious unless an alert observer succeeds on a Notice roll.
- **Sign Language:** Thievery counts as its own language skill, commonly understood by many and used whenever verbal speech is lacking.

RACES OF ATHAS

Intelligent creatures inhabit every harsh, desolate corner of the world of Athas. Giants roam the Silt Sea, gith wander the mountains and canyons, and braxats and belgoi stalk the deserts, but few of these cultures have made a lasting impact on the Tyr Region and its nearby environs. (**Note:** Races in Savage Sun are more powerful than in other settings and have a net total of 4 points of racial abilities instead of 2.)

Aarakocra: Freedom-loving pilgrims who rule the sky and protect nature.

Dwarves: Driven by their Focus, a dwarf survives through dedicated purpose.

Elves: Desert-dwelling nomads with reputations for thievery and deception.

Humans: The rulers of the world, the backbone of Athasian culture.

Half-Elves: Cast out of all societies, half-elves rely on themselves for survival.

Half-Giants: Magically bred slave race created to be servitors of the Sorcerer-kings.

Halflings: The most ancient race, they are savage, spiritual, and mysterious.

Muls: A crossbreed of humans and dwarves bred to be the ultimate gladiators.

Pterrans: Reptilian disciples of the Earth Mother, protectors of the tribal ways.

Thri-kreen: Alien insectoid creatures with incredibly strange customs.



Aarakocra

The bird-people of Athas grow to an average height of 7½ feet tall with wingspans of 20 feet. Males weigh about 100 pounds, while females weigh about 85. With gray beaks, black eyes, and plumage that ranges from purest white to silver to crimson red to shades of pale blue, the aarakocra of different tribes can look very different from one another. Many young aarakocra seek to break from their family unit during adolescence. They are adventurous, seeking higher purpose and a broader knowledge of the world. In all cases, aarakocra have a deep and abiding respect for the gifts of nature and little patience for those who abuse those gifts. Many aarakocra have made homes within the city-states, and can be found in all the walks of life that any being might.



As beings intimately connected to high mountain peaks and the open sky, aarakocra have a great love of freedom. In some ways, this love is even more intense than a similar emotion experienced by elves. They prefer to always be above a situation, either flying or perched above the rest of a group so that they can have a bird's-eye view. Aarakocra are claustrophobic and will only enter an enclosed building or cave if absolutely necessary. Aarakocra make excellent fighters and good rangers, but their fear of enclosed places makes them wither in captivity, so they almost never develop into gladiators. Some aarakocra send a select number of their tribes to learn preserving magic, but almost no bird-person will willingly develop the skills necessary to be a defiler. Aarakocra clerics are almost universally devoted to the air sphere.

Aarakocra tend to find work easily amid the city-states, as there is always a need for a swift messenger, a keen lookout, or a skilled bounty hunter. Though rare, some even become templar.

- **Wings:** Aarakocra can fly at a Pace of 12", as long as they have room to do so. Aarakocra use their feet for a variety of tasks, including fighting, since their arms are also their wings. As a result, most equipment needs to be specially made, and they get a -2 penalty to Trait tests when using equipment not designed for them. They can't wear armor or clothing not made for them, and specially made items cost double. They have a walking Pace of 5" and a d4 running die. (1)
- **Talons:** Aarakocra claws deal Str+d4 damage, and aarakocra are never considered unarmed. (2)
- **Thick Hides:** Aarakocra have +2 Natural Armor due to their thick hides. (1)
- **Dexterous:** Aarakocra start with a d6 Agility, and their Agility has a max of d12+1. (2)
- **Bird's Eye View:** Aarakocra start with a d6 in Notice, and their maximum is d12+1 (1)
- **Diving Attack:** When making a Wild Attack while flying at least 5" before the attack, an aarakocra gets The Drop against their target (instead of the normal benefits). (2)
- **Claustrophobia:** All aarakocra hate enclosed spaces; if forced into them, they suffer a -1 penalty to all Trait tests. (-1)
- **Hollow Bones:** Aarakocra suffer a -1 penalty to all Vigor rolls and all Strength rolls, including damage rolls. (-4)

Dwarves

Short and powerful, dwarves stand between 4½ and 5 feet tall. Their frames are nevertheless extremely massive, and an average dwarf weighs in the vicinity of 200 pounds. Life in the Athasian wastes make them rugged, tanned, and callused. Dwarves seek out meaningful work to occupy their time. A dwarf is never happier than when he has a cause to work or fight for. A stoic race, dwarves love to approach tasks with a single-minded intensity. They devote their very beings to these tasks, laboring for weeks, years, even decades to the exclusion of other endeavors. Once a dwarf is committed to a particular task, it takes a great deal of coercion to make him set it aside for even a limited amount of time. A dwarf strives for the personal fulfillment he achieves upon completing a lengthy, difficult task.



A dwarf's present task is called his focus. No simple job can become a focus. A focus must be a feat that requires at least one week to complete. The concept of the focus is integral to a dwarf's makeup and is even tied to his physiology - so much so that those dwarves who die before completing their foci may become undead banshees who wander the wastes haunting their unfinished works.

A dwarf character reacts to other characters based upon his current focus. If another character is actively committed to the dwarf's focus, the dwarf considers that character to be a sensible and dependable companion. If, however, a character vehemently opposes a dwarf's focus, the two are irrevocably at odds until one or the other is dead. There's very little room for compromise in a dwarf's mind.

- **Non-Magical:** Dwarves start with the Arcane Resistance Edge. (2)
- **Poison-Immune:** Dwarves are immune to poison. (1)
- **Dark Dwellers:** Dwarves have Infravision. (1)
- **Stout:** Dwarves start with a d6 in Strength and d8 in Vigor; their maximums in these are d12+1 and d12+2, respectively. (6)
- **Focus:** This essentially works as the Driven (Major) Hindrance, except each time it is finished/fulfilled, the character must choose another goal; a dwarf can never be without a Focus. As a bonus, however, each time a new Focus is chosen, the dwarf character may also choose a single Skill that relates to that Focus. Until the Focus is finished/fulfilled, the dwarf receives a +1 bonus with that Skill. (-1)
- **Short Limbs:** Dwarves have a base Pace of 5" and a d4 Running die. They suffer a -1 penalty to all Agility rolls. (-3)
- **Set in Their Ways:** Dwarves start with the Stubborn and Cautious Hindrances. (-2)

Elves

The elves of Athas are long-limbed sprinters who lead lives of thievery, raiding, trading, and warfare. They stand between 6 ½ and 7½ feet tall, with slender yet muscular builds. They have deeply etched features, with skin that has been made rugged by the baking sun and the scouring sand. The color of their skin is as varied as that of the other races of Athas, and as affected by the rays of the sun. They grow no facial hair, but the locks atop their heads come in shades of lightest blond to darkest black. They dress in garb designed to protect them from the desert and the elements.

Elves are tireless wanderers forged in the endless desert - burned dark by the sun, toughened by the swirling sand, and given strength and speed by the constant wind. There's no racial unity among them. Within a given tribe, all elves are brethren, but outsiders - even other elves - are regarded as potential enemies. Outsiders can be accepted and perhaps even become friends, but trust takes time to develop and is often associated with tests and great sacrifice.

Elves are seen as lazy and deceitful, and in most ways they are. They desire to lead short, happy lives as opposed to long, sad ones. The future, to an elf, is a dark, deadly place. This compels them to strive to make every moment as full and enjoyable as possible. They call this concept of the moment "the now." Elves do work, however, and in some ways they work harder than members of other races. They won't farm, but they'll spend a lot of time and energy hunting and foraging. They detest hard labor, but they'll spend hours on end haggling and negotiating with potential customers.

Elves crave free, open spaces in which to run, so elf slaves wither in captivity if they can't escape. Travelers often see whole tribes of elves running swiftly across the sandy wastes. Only rarely will a member of this race ride an animal. To do so is dishonorable unless wounded and near death. The custom of the elves is to keep up or be left behind.

Most elf tribes make a living through herding, but merchants and raiders also ply the desert roads. Elf culture, while savage, is also rich and diverse. They have turned celebrating into an art form, and elf song and dance is some of the most beautiful and captivating in all of Athas. They fabricate tests of trust and friendship constantly until such time as they are ready to bond with their companions—or leave them for other pastures.

- **Native Weapons:** Elves receive a +1 to Fighting and Shooting if they're using a sword or bow crafted by their own tribe. (2)
- **Elven Stealth:** Elves start with a d6 in Stealth, and their maximum is d12+1. (1)
- **Keen Eyes:** Elves have Infravision. (1)
- **Desert Acclimated:** Elves have +4 to Fatigue checks to resist the Heat and Cold hazards. (2)
- **Swift and Graceful:** Elves start with a Pace of 8" and a d8 running die. They also start with a d6 Agility, and their maximum Agility is d12+1. (4)
- **Elf Run:** The Elf Run is a trance-like state an elf can enter in order to cross vast distances of desert without stopping for rest. To initiate the Elf Run, the elf makes a Vigor roll as an action; for each success and raise, the elf can run at full speed for a full day without stopping. After this period (or if the elf chooses to end the trance early to do something besides run), the elf must wait a day before engaging in the Elf Run again. Other hazards, such as heat, thirst and hunger still apply, but the elf will not become tired or need to rest (and as long as they don't stop, they can eat or drink while running, and running does not cause penalties against Heat). (1)

- **Fragile and Weak-Willed:** Elves have a -1 penalty to all Vigor and Spirit rolls. (-4)
- **Devious:** Some stereotypes are true; all elves have the Greedy (Minor) Hindrance. (-1)
- **Two Legs are Better than Four:** Elves suffer a -2 penalty to all Riding rolls. (-1)
- **Racial Enemy:** Elves despise half-elves; even those elves who give birth to the crossbreeds are viewed with suspicion and enmity. Elves and half-elves suffer a -2 to Persuasion when dealing with each other and may become hostile quickly. (-1)



Half-Elves

Half-elves are produced through the union of elves and humans. These characters of mixed breeding combine features of both races to create something unique. Indeed, half-elves can even produce children, unlike muls. Half-elves grow taller than humans but don't reach the height of elves, averaging about 6½ feet. They are also bulkier than elves, making it easier to pass themselves off as full humans than as full elves. Even so, all half-elves have telltale features that hint at their elven heritage. Despite their unique nature, half-elves don't form their own communities. They live in human societies, either in the city-states or among the tribes and villages that fill the wilderness.



A half-elf's life is typically harder than either a human's or an elf's. Intolerance from others is the main cause for this difficult existence, which often shapes and defines a half-elf's nature. As such, a half-elf rarely finds acceptance in either parent's society. Elves have no tolerance for children of mixed blood; their traditions demand that such children and even their mothers be cast out of the tribe. Humans aren't quite as harsh, and half-elves born into human society have a better chance of survival, but life isn't particularly enjoyable or easy. Humans will accept half-elves as allies or partners, but seldom will they accept them into their homes or families, and few will call a half-elf friend.

Humans have no faith in a half-elf's elven side, and elves distrust the human in these crossbreeds. Because of this, a half-elf goes through life as an outsider and loner. He wanders from situation to situation without a people or a land to call home. Thus, he is forced to develop high levels of self-reliance in order to survive. This self-reliance is a half-elf's greatest asset, and a half-elf prides himself on it. He learns not only the skills of survival but methods for dealing with loneliness as well. This may make a half-elf seem detached and aloof, but he will cooperate with companions when necessary. This air of indifference often hides a desire to gain acceptance from one side of a half-elf's heritage or the other, a pursuit that's usually in vain. Fortunately, however, other races don't have a basic dislike of half-elves, so these characters typically find companionship among dwarves or thri-kreen. Some half-elves also turn to the animal world for company, training creatures to be servants and friends.

- **Keen Eyes:** Half-elves have Infravision. (1)
- **Rugged:** Half-elves start with a d6 in Survival and have a maximum of d12+1. (2)
- **Animal Companion:** Half-Elves start with the Beast Master and Beast Bond Edges. (4)
- **Outsiders:** Half-elves have no homes nor culture; not even a tribe to welcome them. They are true outsiders, and thus have that (Major) Hindrance. (-2)
- **Cast Out:** Elves in particular hate the half-elves, and so they each suffer a -2 to Persuasion when dealing with the other (this stacks with the penalties from the Outsider Hindrance). (-1)

Half-Giants

Half-giants are a relatively new addition to the races of Athas. The union was originally the result of magical experiments conducted by the sorcerer-kings. When the sorcerer-kings first took control of the cities of the Tyr Region, they used their arcane powers to cross humans with giants, striving to create warriors and laborers of gigantic proportions. From giants, this race inherited tremendous size and strength, as well as low intelligence. From humans, they received curiosity and an interest in cooperation. Although half-giants have human features, these tend to be exaggerated in some way. All existing half-giants are the descendants of the original magically created half-giants. They can only produce offspring by mating with other half-giants; they cannot reproduce with either giants or humans.

Like half-elves, half-giants don't gather in communities of their own. Instead they live in the human cities or in the wilderness tribes, absorbing the culture of those around them. They are friendly and eager to please whoever they meet. If they are accepted in turn, the half-giants quickly adopt the lifestyles, skills, and values of those they've come in contact with. For example, a half-giant who happens upon a dwarf quarry might watch for a time, then start quarrying stone. He won't necessarily work with the dwarves, but he'll continue to perform like his neighbors for as long as he can make a decent living.

Half-giants aren't strictly bound to perform as those they see around them, nor are they restricted from moving on when they see fit. If a situation isn't beneficial, or if a half-giant can't perform well in a given environment, he won't imitate the nearby culture. In all cases, half-giants simply aren't as emotionally attached to objects or work as are other races. Players running half-giant characters should be ready to switch goals and lifestyles quickly, usually according to charismatic individuals their characters might meet. They also need to remember that their characters have great size and strength, and so must play accordingly. For the most part, Athas is a human-sized world. Half-giants often have trouble with things that other characters take for granted, such as doors, chairs, and even buildings.

- **Mighty Heritage:** Half-giants start with a d10 in Strength and the Brute Edge. (8)
- **Enormous:** Half-giants are Size +3. This gives a +3 to their Toughness, +1 Reach, and their carrying capacity is 160 pounds per Strength die type. Their maximum Strength is d12+6. (4)
- **Durable:** Half-giants start with a d6 in Vigor, and their maximum is d12+1. They also have the Hardy quality; if they receive a second Shaken result in combat, it doesn't cause a Wound. (4)
- **Too Big for Their Britches:** Half-giants must pay at least double for armor, weapons and tools of an appropriate size for them, and suffer a -2 penalty to all Trait tests with any weapon or device not specifically designed for their size. They also suffer a -2 penalty to Stealth rolls. (-4)
- **Bottomless Pit:** Half-giants need 8x as much food and water every day to survive as a human (so that's 8 gallons of water per day, and roughly 16,000-20,000 calories in food). Or to put it another way, a half-giant needs 8 humans' worth of food and water. (-2)
- **Uncultured:** Half-giants have a -1 penalty to all Smarts and Spirit rolls and a -2 penalty to Persuasion. (-6)
- **Variable Alignment:** Each morning, a half-giant may swap any one non-physical Hindrance for a different Hindrance of the same type (Minor/Major). A half-giant may be Loyal one day and Mean the next, or they may go from being Curious to Bloodthirsty. A half-giant's surroundings and company have a keen influence on this change. Hindrances that are imposed as a result of another source (such as from an Arcane Background) may not be altered; only Hindrances chosen normally as part of the character creation process. (0)

Halflings

In the ancient past, halflings were rumored to have had an advanced civilization, and remnants of that culture persist in strange tales and legends told by their people. Today, however, halflings are primitive savages who control only limited areas of Athas.

Where once halflings filled the land in every direction, today they inhabit the slowly disappearing forests and jungles, like the Forest Ridge and the Fertile Crescent. Where once they were civilized masters of an advanced society, today they are feral, savage creatures as wild as the arid winds. They are more willing to eat a stranger in their lands than to welcome him. Halflings grow to a height of 3½ feet and weigh 50 to 60 pounds. They are muscled and proportioned like humans, but they have the faces of wise and beautiful children whose features never succumb to the rigors of age. They always appear to be in peak physical condition. Ritual and custom control every aspect of halfling life, and their culture is rich in art and song. Oral tradition recounts the halflings' mighty past, though it has deteriorated to the point where memories seem but legend and fable.

Halflings strongly believe in racial unity. Though the halfling race is divided politically and geographically into separate villages and tribes, each halfling respects his race as a whole. Disputes between members of different tribes are settled peaceably whenever possible through ritual and custom. These customs are often directed by each tribe's shamans, the elemental clerics or druids who hold positions of honor and respect above all other halflings. On a personal level, halflings relate to each other extremely well. A considerable culture of art, song, and other expressive means of communication has developed that crosses the political and geographical bounds separating the tribes. Even such diverse halfling groups as the cliff-dwellers of Thamasku and the desert raiders of Small Water can communicate on a basic level with halflings of other regions.

Because of this, halflings rely on their culture to express abstract thoughts and to relay complicated concepts quickly. A typical halfling assumes that whomever he's talking to has the same culture to draw upon and therefore understands everything passing between them. It's difficult for a halfling to compensate for a listener who isn't intimately familiar with the culture. As such, it's easy for halflings to become frustrated with outsiders. However, halflings who travel widely have a greater tolerance of those who "lack culture." These halflings can communicate without an immediate sense of frustration.

Halfling culture cares for each individual's inner well-being and spiritual unity with race and environment. They have little concept of conquest or monetary wealth, and vices that other societies take for granted—such as greed and avarice—are particularly discouraged. Halfling player characters should role-play difficulty in adjusting to other customs and points of view. As a generally open-minded race, halflings tend to be curious or confused by the actions of others rather than initially combative. Halflings will attempt to learn all they can about other cultures, but will almost never adopt those cultures as their own. Halfling clerics teach that the customs of others are no threat to their own, so a halfling player character will welcome the chance to learn another point of view, rather than instantly try to change it.

Treasure that appeals to other character races holds little interest to a halfling PC. He's more concerned with promoting halfling culture, his own knowledge, or his inner well-being. He'll never lie to or betray another halfling. Lastly, he sees his own size as not a detriment but an advantage. Stealth and speed, for example, is better than bulk any day.

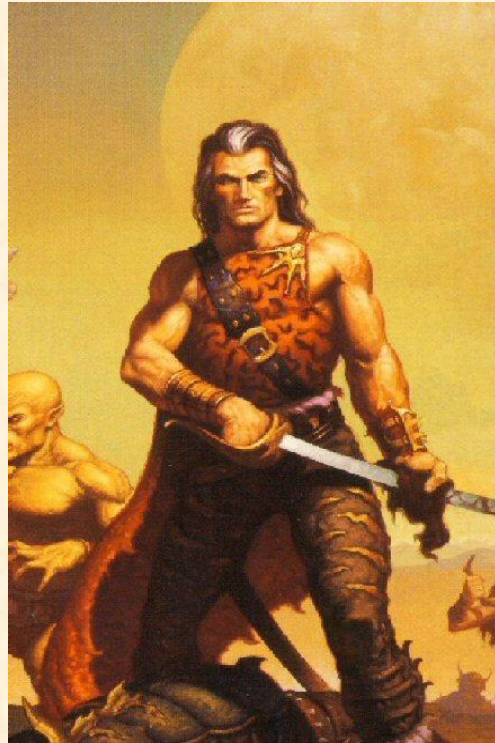
- **More Ancient than Magic:** Halflings have the Arcane Resistance Edge. (2)
- **Life in the Wild:** Halflings are immune to poison. (1)
- **The Bigger They Are:** Halflings start with a d6 in Stealth and Athletics (max d12+1 in both) and get an additional +2 to all Athletics rolls. (4)
- **Nimble and Wise:** Halflings start with a d6 in Agility and Spirit, and their maximums in both are d12+1. (4)
- **Small World:** Halflings are Size -1. This gives them a -1 Toughness, and their carrying capacity is only 10 pounds per Strength die type. They have a base Pace of 5" and a d4 Running Die. (-2)
- **Wild and Weird:** Though open-minded, halflings have a deep, strange culture and there are great cultural barriers between them and other races. It doesn't help that they have a reputation for consuming intelligent creatures. They have the Outsider (Minor) Hindrance. (-1)
- **Weaklings:** Halflings have a -2 penalty to all Strength rolls, including damage rolls. (-3)
- **All That Glitters:** Halflings have little concern for normal treasure, and don't tend to hold on to much of it. Treat this like the Poverty (Minor) Hindrance. (-1)



Humans

Due to the Cleansing Wars of ages past and their own natural tenacity, humans are the predominant race on Athas. They are a versatile breed, brilliant and exceptional as often as they are unremarkable and mundane. The average Athasian human male stands between 6 and 6½ feet tall and weighs 180 to 220 pounds. Females are typically smaller, topping out at 6 feet tall and weighing 100 to 140 pounds. Skin, eye, and hair color vary widely, though most Athasians humans have tanned, weathered exteriors.

Compared to muls and half-giants, humans aren't very strong. They are, however, cunning, highly inventive, and persistent in the extreme. They tend toward impulsiveness and great daring, seeking to make the most of whatever fate throws their way. Wherever life has entrenched itself in the Athasian wastelands, humans can be found.



Humans can also be found at all levels of society. In the city-states, humans fill more than their share of the ranks, from nobles and templars to free workers and lowly slaves. In the wilderness, humans hunt with slave tribes, drive herds with nomadic clans, and lead or serve merchant caravans as they trek across the barren plains. Humans are extremely adaptable and usually highly tolerant of the differences that drive other races to war. They often serve as diplomats, tribal chiefs, or some other function that binds different races together.

- **Adaptable:** Humans begin with a free Novice Edge of their choice, though they must still meet all prerequisites. (2)
- **Kings of Culture:** Humans have some of the most varied cultural practices of any race. Their constant exchange of information and leadership skills have given them a tremendous edge in the political arena of Athas. Humans begin with a d6 in both Common Knowledge and Persuasion, and their maximum in both is d12+1. (2)

Muls

Muls are the results of crossbreeding humans and dwarves. Each mul is sterile; the only way to create a new mul is through the union of a human and a dwarf. This race of mixed heritage has existed since the two primary races first came in contact with each other, but muls have only achieved great numbers since the city-states of the sorcerer-kings began breeding them for specific purpose and profit. Most muls are born in the slave pits of the merchant houses and city-states and then set to work as laborers or gladiators.



A mul has the height and adaptability of his human heritage and the raw strength and durability of his dwarf side. Adult muls stand between 6 and 7 feet tall and weigh as much as 300 pounds. They have a high metabolism that makes them lean and muscular, with broad shoulders and very little body fat. Muls look like large humans with a few obvious differences: prominent eye ridges, pointed ears, and no body hair.

This race, like the half-giants and half-elves, doesn't have a culture of its own. With few exceptions, muls are slaves or ex-slaves who live in the city-states or among the slave tribes that inhabit the wastes. Born to the slave pens, the taskmaster's whip takes the place of loving parents and family. For this reason, muls often have gruff personalities and tend toward violent reactions. Many never seek friends or companionship, living out their lives of servitude in hatred and spite.

Some muls learn the ways of the slave pits, figuring out whom to trust, who not to, and gaining favor and reputation among the other slaves. Muls who perform well in the arenas receive the most pampered treatment of any slaves. For this reason, some don't see slavery as that great a hardship. However, those who have tasted the sweet air of freedom will fight to retain it.

Player character muls have either escaped, been set free, or otherwise won their freedom and now live independent lives. Free muls usually take advantage of the combat skills they've acquired and work as soldiers or guards. A smaller number turn away from violence to follow other paths, such as psionic disciplines or priestly devotions. A few even learn the skills necessary to become thieves.

- **Bred for Muscle:** Muls begin with a d8 in Strength and a d6 in Vigor. Their maximums in these Attributes are d12+2 and d12+1, respectively. (6)
- **Tireless:** Muls need only 8 hours of rest every 3 days. When forced to make Fatigue rolls against Sleep, they roll every 72 hours instead of every 24, and gain a +4 to the roll. (1)
- **Gruff Temper:** Muls are very rough around the edges and lack niceties. Even if they strive to overcome it, they frequently come off as mean, and thus have the Mean (Minor) Hindrance. (-1)
- **No Education:** Muls aren't bred for brains, and they aren't generally educated. They get a -1 penalty to all Smarts rolls. (-2)

Pterrans

Pterrans are reptiloids with light brown, scaly skin who grow to be about 6 feet tall. A pterrann stands upright in the humanoid configuration, though his two arms end in three-fingered, talon-clawed hands with opposable thumbs, and his two legs end in three-toed feet. A finlike growth juts from the back of a pterrann's head, and he has a short tail and two shoulder stubs—remnants of wings that vanished generations ago.

Pterrans create villages and enclaves all throughout the Tablelands, and are a common sight for traveling caravans. They revere the world of Athas as their Earth Mother, believing themselves to be her first, best children. Though encounters between Pterrans and other races are common, there is little interaction between them – pterrans are wary of other races and the feeling is often mutual given their strange and sometimes frightening nature.



Pterrans may be wary at first, but when others earn a pterrann's trust, they can become dedicated allies. Pterrans aren't primitive by any definition of the word. They'll look upon differences with curiosity and a willingness to learn, as long as the custom doesn't harm the Earth Mother or her works. Pterrans select a "Life Path" to follow, signifying their deep devotion to a chosen way of life. The main Life Paths are the Path of the Warrior (fighters, gladiators, or rangers), the Druid, and Psionicist. Lesser Life Paths allow pterrans to become thieves, traders, or other things, though only rarely do they become clerics, and almost never arcane spellcasters.

- **Thick Scales:** Pterrans get +2 Natural Armor. (1)
- **Sharp Claws:** Pterrans claws deal Str+d4 damage and they are never considered unarmed. (2)
- **Strong and Savvy:** Pterrans start with a d6 in Spirit and Strength, and their maximums in both are d12+1. (4)
- **No Sweat:** Pterrans get a +4 bonus to Fatigue checks against the Thirst Hazard. (1)
- **Natural Coloration:** The shades of brown that make up a pterrann's scales provide camouflage in most of Athas' natural environments. While in natural terrain (not cities, buildings, or the like), pterrans have a +2 to Stealth (or +4 if remaining completely motionless). (1)
- **Strange Ways:** Throughout the day, pterrans engage in a dozen or more small rituals, celebrations, or other practices that honor the Earth Mother and reinforce the pterrann's unusual beliefs and faith. They have limited understanding of the cultures of others and are slow to trust. They have the Outsider (Minor) and Quirk Hindrances. (-2)
- **Cold-Blooded:** Pterrans suffer a -1 to Agility, Strength, and Vigor rolls after spending more than ten minutes in temperatures below 60 degrees (incredibly rare during the day, but almost every night drops this low or lower, making it difficult to operate at night). (-3)

Thri-Kreen

The insectoid thri-kreen is the least “human” of the player character races. The average thri-kreen stands 7 feet tall and grows 11 feet long from end to end. With six limbs, a sandy-yellow exoskeleton, and large, multifaceted eyes, a thri-kreen looks like a huge, intelligent mantis. While there are at least six kreen subspecies, the distinction is lost on the other races, who couldn’t possibly tell the difference between them.

A thri-kreen’s hind legs are its most powerful limbs, allowing him to walk, run, and leap at phenomenal speed. The four forward limbs end in three-fingered hands that can manipulate tools and weapons as effectively as a human’s hands.

Thri-kreen gather in packs that roam the Athasian wastes. There are no permanent thri-kreen communities, which may account for why they have little understanding of human society or customs. Thri-kreen don’t need sleep and are thus never idle. Most thri-kreen are obsessed with the hunt, the daily ritual that makes up much of their life. They strive to become skilled and wise hunters capable of stalking and catching what they need and then moving on before a region is depleted of game.

Non-kreen sometimes view this preoccupation with gathering food and maintaining traveling supplies as a bit strange, especially considering that thri-kreen hunt throughout the night while other races “lazily lie around.” Further, thri-kreen care nothing for money or other items that are usually considered as treasure. In fact, a thri-kreen owns only what he can carry on his person.

Carnivores, thri-kreen will look toward other intelligent races as sources of food in extreme emergencies. Some kreen have a particular taste for elves, which puts both races in uneasy positions when forced to cooperate. However, thri-kreen won’t turn to other members of their “packs” for food—no matter how desperate the situation. A thri-kreen PC adopts his adventuring companions as his pack, regardless of their mix of races; this includes whoever he is with at the time danger strikes. He’ll instinctively leap to protect his companions, regardless of personal danger. The pack mentality is so ingrained in thri-kreen culture that they apply it to every situation they find themselves in.

- **Bug Anatomy:** Thri-kreen have several advantages as a result of their unique physiology. They get +4 Natural Armor due to their exoskeletons and have antennae that allow them to ignore all illumination penalties and up to 4 points of other sight-based penalties within 10”. Internal water storage also gives them a +4 to Fatigue checks to resist the Thirst Hazard. (4)
- **Four Claws & A Bite:** Thri-kreen have four clawed upper limbs. The claws deal Str+d4 damage. A thri-kreen is considered to have one dominant “side” (just as a human does), meaning the limbs on that side are dominant and those on the other side are “off.” The Ambidextrous Edge can be taken to negate the off-side penalty. They are never “unarmed” and they ignore 2 points of Multi-Action Penalties each turn. Their mandibles deal Str+d6 damage. (9)
- **Big Bugs:** A thri-kreen is Size +1. This gives them a +1 Toughness and makes their carrying capacity equal to 40 pounds per Strength die type, and makes their max Strength d12+1. (1)
- **Skittering:** Thri-kreen start with a d6 in Agility. Their maximum Agility is d12+1. They have a Pace of 10” and a d10 running die. (6)
- **Instincts:** Thri-kreen are natural hunters. They start with a d4 in Fighting and Survival. (2)
- **Sleepless in Athas:** Thri-kreen do not sleep, generally spending the night hunting instead. (2)

- **Cannot Speak:** Thri-kreen can't speak any language other than their own; they just can't make the sounds, and no other race can make their sounds. They can learn to understand other languages, but it's challenging; thri-kreen start with 2 fewer languages than their Smarts die would indicate. Since Elementals are unhindered by language, even prayers in the Kreen speech can invoke them, but being unable to speak precludes thri-kreen from using arcane magic, as they cannot intone the proper words of power to satisfy the activation requirement. (-3)
- **Stranger in a Strange Land:** Thri-kreen don't understand the customs and manners of other races very well, and have a hard time interacting in their society. They have the Outsider (Major) Hindrance and don't start with the Common Knowledge Core Skill (though they may buy it normally later). (-3)
- **Instinct over Intellect:** Thri-kreen actions are guided by natural responses and they rarely plan or strategize deeply, nor are they great scholars. They get a -1 penalty to all Smarts rolls. (-2)
- **Pack Mentality:** Thri-kreen always have the Loyal Hindrance. (-1)
- **Only What You Can Carry:** Thri-kreen don't understand money well and won't keep physical possessions past what they can carry. Treat this as the Poverty Hindrance. (-1)
- **Weird Physiology:** Thri-kreen must pay double for gear and weapons that they don't craft for themselves. They suffer a -2 penalty on any Trait tests with an object not designed for them, including weapons. (-2)
- **Born Yesterday:** Thri-kreen have very short life spans and reach maturity rapidly. As a result, most thri-kreen have very little experience compared to other races. Thri-kreen characters begin at Novice rank instead of Seasoned, with no automatic Advances (per the **Powerful Heroes** setting rule). Thri-kreen may not take the Young Hindrance (-8).



NEW EDGES

Ancestral Edge

KREEN TALENTS

Requirements: Seasoned, Thri-kreen

You have developed some of the natural advantages certain members of your race develop in response to rugged conditions and considerable travel. You double all jumping distances and add +4 to damage (instead of the normal +2) when leaping as part of a Wild Attack. You are always considered to have a running start when jumping.

You may take this Edge a second time at Veteran rank or above. If you do, you may create a dose of Paralyzing poison with your mandibles. You may create one dose by taking a level of Fatigue, but thri-kreen venom loses its potency in an hour, so you can't hoard doses. This poison may be delivered with a Bite or it may be applied to a weapon or claw. Thri-kreen are immune to their own venom.

Power Edge

WILD TALENT

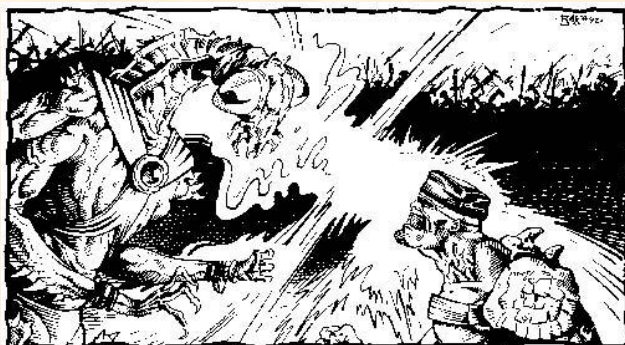
Requirements: Novice

Special: Player characters in the Savage Sun setting begin with this Edge for free. Many NPCs and even wild creatures have this Edge; at the GM's discretion, any living creature may be a Wild Talent.

All living things on Athas have some psionic potential, but only a few develop it into the path of the psionist. Others simply have enough raw power to become a Wild Talent. Wild Talents roll randomly for a single Psionic power (see the Wild Talents random chart). The hero gains that power and 10 dedicated Power Points that recharge normally. As a limited action, the hero automatically activates the power with success for its regular cost, or with a raise for an additional 2 Power Points. She may use applicable Power Modifiers if desired (at the usual cost). Wild Talent doesn't grant access to Edges that require an Arcane Background, but she may take the Power Points or Soul Drain Edge. If the hero also has an Arcane Background, none of its Edges or abilities can be used with Wild Talent and vice versa.

Certain powers require an opposed roll (such as Puppet) or a roll to hit (such as Bolt). In these cases, use Spirit for the opposed roll and pay the base cost, using the roll to determine possible raises, as normal. Lose 1 Power Point on a failure, and a Critical Failure results in Dynamic Backlash!

If this hero ever becomes a psionist, this Edge is lost, but the psionist retains the known power as a bonus addition to their powers known.



Wild Talents – Random List

When determining which Power is available to the Wild Talent, note that all trappings must be selected at the time the power is gained and are fixed. Roll a d100 on the following chart to determine which power the Wild Talent possesses (ignore Rank requirements):

- 1-3: Arcane Protection
- 4-6: Barrier
- 7-9: Beast Friend
- 10-12: Blind
- 13-15: Bolt
- 16-18: Boost/Lower Trait
- 19-21: Confusion
- 22-24: Relief
- 25-27: Darksight
- 28-30: Deflection
- 31-33: Detect/Conceal Arcana
- 34-36: Empathy
- 37-39: Farsight
- 40-42: Fear
- 43-45: Fly
- 46-48: Growth/Shrink
- 49-51: Havoc
- 52-54: Intangibility
- 55-57: Invisibility
- 58-60: Mind Link
- 61-63: Mind Reading
- 64-66: Mind Wipe
- 67-69: Object Reading
- 70-72: Protection
- 73-75: Puppet
- 76-78: Sloth/Speed
- 79-81: Smite
- 82-84: Speak Language
- 85-87: Stun
- 88-90: Telekinesis
- 91-93: Teleport
- 94-96: Warrior's Gift
- 97-99: Scrying*
- 100: Roll again twice, ignoring this result.

WILD TALENTS: WHEN TO ROLL?

Wild Talents are an integral part of the experience in Savage Sun. Just as in the original Dark Sun setting, every character getting a random psionic ability adds a fun and furious element to the game while simultaneously supporting the worldbuilding of the setting. An important part of that consideration is that the power is *wild*, i.e. random.

As the GM, you're perfectly within your rights to allow the players to choose their Wild Talent instead of rolling it, but some of the fun is definitely lost in doing so. The more "classic" approach that most closely mirrors the original setting is to roll for Wild Talent *last*, after the character has been completely created. This way, your Wild Talent truly is an unpredictable power – always an asset, but perhaps forcing you to get creative in its application. (Of course, in the case of a psionist character, it's still a good idea to roll for the bonus power provided by the Wild Talent Edge before finalizing power selection, to avoid duplication).

A middle-ground approach is to randomly roll the Wild Talent, but do so *first*, before other character choices are made. This way, while the power is still random, its early manifestation in the character's life may have shaped what path they took and what choices they made. This gives the player the option to build "around" the Wild Talent somewhat. In any case, it's your game – there's no wrong way to use this feature!

Rogue Edges

Each of these Edges is mutually exclusive; a character may only ever have one Rogue Edge. However, each Edge may be taken multiple times, though no more than once per Rank. Each time the same Edge is taken, a different benefit is chosen. The benefits may be chosen in any order.

ATHASIAN BARD

Requirements: Novice, Agility d6+, Common Knowledge d8+, Performance d8+, Thievery d6+, Streetwise, Fame

Athasian Bards play a vital role in the Tyr region; they are one of the primary sources of entertainment, information, and intrigue in the City-States. The greatest are sent to the homes of nobles for entertainment – and espionage. Choose one of the following:

- You may now use Performance in Social Conflicts where the outcome is affecting popular opinion or influencing a noble's decision and to Network (gaining the +2 bonus from Streetwise as well). If you use Performance, success grants you most of what you want, though you attract some attention. A raise means you find what you want with subtlety. A Critical Failure means halves all money from Performances in the next week. You get a free reroll when using Performance to Support allies.
- You may craft poisons in half the usual time and you never risk poisoning yourself when doing so. Your contact poisons last 12 hours instead of 4. You are adept at delivering poisons as well: Notice rolls to detect poison are now opposed by your Thievery.
- You learn a smattering of just about everything – and everyone. You get a free reroll on all Common Knowledge rolls. If you spend a Benny, you may substitute Common Knowledge for any other non-combat skill roll.

DUNE TRADER

Requirements: Novice, Smarts d6+, Common Knowledge d6+, Persuasion d8+, Trade Tongue d8+, Charismatic, Connections (any Merchant House)

Traders are the agents of the great Merchant Houses, whose role is to move resources across the great Tyr region – at a tidy profit for themselves. Choose one of the following:

- Gain a +2 to Persuasion rolls during social conflicts and when Bribing Officials, as they are masters of haggling, double-dealing, fast talk and bureaucracy. Initial reactions to you start one level higher. When using Persuasion, you choose if the target resists with Spirit or Smarts.
- Part diplomat, you gain one die type in all languages. Your Persuasion is no longer limited by language as long as it's not higher than your own Trade Tongue – after all, money talks.
- Access to House resources gives you the benefits of the Rich and Scavenger Edges.

VASSAL THIEF

Requirements: Novice, Agility d8+, Athletics d6+ Stealth d8+, Thievery d8+, Assassin, Thief

The most skilled and accomplished rogues work directly for noble patrons, becoming elite members of a wealthy family's entourage and assets in their intrigues. Choose one of the following:

- Double the bonuses from the Thief Edge.
- The damage bonus from Assassin is now a d6 (which can Ace).
- When forging documents, a Common Knowledge roll can replace the need for an example document, and examination of the documents for authentication is done at a -2 penalty.

Warrior Edges

Each of these Edges is mutually exclusive; a character may only ever have one Warrior Edge. However, each Edge may be taken multiple times, though no more than once per Rank. Each time the same Edge is taken, a different benefit is chosen. The benefits may be chosen in any order.

FIGHTER-COMMANDER

Requirements: Novice, Strength d6+, Fighting d8+, Battle d8+, Riding d6+, Command, Soldier

On Athas, the fighter is a trained warrior, a soldier skilled in mass warfare. Every society on Athas maintains an army to protect itself from attack or to wage wars against its neighbors. Fighters are both the commanders and soldiers in these armies. Choose one of the following:

- Skilled in the tactics of vehicular combat, you get a free reroll on all Riding rolls. Any mount or beast-powered vehicle you ride increases its pace by 2 and its running die one type. Melee attacks against your mount must beat your Parry if it's higher than the beast's.
- The Gang-Up bonus for you and your allies becomes 2 per person rather than 1, though the max is still +4. Once per encounter as a free action, you may choose any Combat Edge that you meet the prerequisites for; you and all allies in your Command Radius gain that Edge for 5 rounds.
- You get a free reroll on all Battle rolls and your Command Radius doubles. Your stronghold gets a +1 to all Military rolls. In addition, siege weapons under your command deal an additional die of damage and halve reload times.

GLADIATOR

Requirements: Novice, Strength d8+, Vigor d6+, Fighting d10+, Killer Instinct, Martial Artist

You have honed your skills in the legendary fighting pits and arenas of the Tyr region and are adept at both the physical and mental challenges found within. Choose one of the following:

- You deal +1 damage and +2 AP with all weapon attacks. You may treat your Strength as one die type higher for determining which weapons you can wield and their maximum damage.
- As long as you are wearing armor, you optimize its function, getting +2 Armor and ignoring extra damage from Called Shots. Your Vigor counts as one die type higher for armor requirements.
- You don't suffer a multi-action penalty for attacking and making a Test in the same round. Whenever you inflict an **Injury**, you may change the Injury table result or sub-result by +1/-1.

WASTELAND RANGER

Requirements: Novice, Agility d6+, Spirit d8+, Vigor d6+, Survival d10+, Beast Master, Woodsman

The role of the ranger is largely unchanged, even in the alien wilderness of Athas. Harsh and unforgiving, this world calls for skilled and capable people to master its ways. The ranger more than answers that challenge. Choose one of the following:

- Choose one type of enemy, such as reptilians, elves, or undead. You get a free reroll when rolling to track (Survival) or attack (Athletics/Fighting/Shooting) that type of enemy.
- You gain access to one of the four elemental cleric spheres, choosing three of the powers listed under one element. Other than the power selection, use the rules for Wild Talent.
- You ignore up to 2 points of any kind of penalties to rolls made using the Survival in the Desert rules (including the penalty for performing more than one role). You gain a +2 to all Common Knowledge rolls regarding the desert's dangers, geography, or tribal peoples. You do not suffer the Unskilled penalty for attempting Tribal Languages you don't know.

ARCANE BACKGROUNDS



What follows are the Arcane Backgrounds available in this setting. These are the only Arcane Backgrounds available; ones listed in *Savage Worlds* do not exist on Athas.

CASTING REQUIREMENTS: In addition to the standard requirements of being able to see your target and not being Bound, all casting on Athas requires the caster be able to speak (with the exception of Psionicists). Prayers are intoned using the native language of the speaker, but Arcane spells are cast using specific, ancient words of power with no direct translation. In either case, if she's gagged, affected by *silence*, or otherwise can't speak, she can't cast. Casters must at least whisper their words of power, so if they don't want to be heard they must beware of those with keen ears (Stealth versus Notice if the GM feels a wary character might hear the recitation, or Thievery to disguise it as something else).

MULTIPLE ARCANE BACKGROUNDS: If a character takes a new Arcane Background, she gets the new powers and a d4 in its arcane skill (if she doesn't already have it). If she already has an Arcane Background or Wild Talent, she uses the largest starting pool of Power Points and applies any increases from other sources to it. All of her Arcane Backgrounds and Wild Talent then share this pool. Each power is activated using the arcane skill of the Arcane Background through which it is gained, and specific Edges or abilities apply only to powers gained from it as well. (For instance, a preserver who takes on a druidic role can't cast *healing* with her Spellcasting skill.) The two powers gained through the New Powers Edge may be all for one Arcane Background or one each for both.

Certain combinations of Arcane Backgrounds are forbidden, as they represent unresolvable conflicts in philosophy. No two backgrounds with the same arcane skill may be combined. In addition, Templar and Defiler may not be combined with Cleric, Druid, or Preserver. Psionicist may be combined with anything.

DEFILER

Defilers are wizards who have decided to take the faster, darker approach to mastering the use of magical spells. In the give and take of spell casting, defilers are well versed in the taking, but give nothing in return. With every spell cast, a defiler leeches the life energy out of the plants and soil around him, leaving behind a lifeless zone. The actual amount of damage done to the environment by a defiling spell depends upon the nature of the land. Because a defiler destroys life as a natural matter of course, his aura has a permanent taint that increases with every rise in power. At first, this taint is simply a bad feeling that others sense dimly. At higher levels, the taint becomes a malignant air of death that even the dullest half-giants can detect.

- **Requirements:** Smarts d6+
- **Arcane Skill:** Spellcasting (Smarts)
- **Starting Powers:** Any five chosen from the list below.
- **Power Points:** 15
- **Available Powers:** *Arcane Protection, Banish, Barrier, Blast, Blind, Bolt, Boost/Lower Trait, Burst, Confusion, Curse*, Damage Field, Darksight, Deflection, Detect/Conceal Arcana, Disguise, Dispel, Drain Power Points, Entangle, Farsight, Fear, Fly, Growth/Shrink, Havoc, Intangibility, Invisibility, Light/Darkness, Protection, Puppet, Sloth/Speed, Slumber, Smite, Summon Ally, Zombie*
- **Magic:** Defilers may take Edges that require Arcane Background (Magic).
- **Armor Interference (Major):** Subtract 4 from Arcane Skill rolls and may not use Arcane Background abilities or Edges dependent on it when wearing more than 1 point of Armor or a medium/heavy shield.
- **Material Components:** Defilers require material components to cast their magic in addition to the life energy they steal from the land. Such items are assumed to be at hand - usually in a pocket, bag, or convenient pouch. If the caster is ever stripped of his possessions and can't get the materials he needs, he reduces all arcane skill rolls by 4 until they're restored (a day's worth of gathering, foraging, or crafting in an appropriate environment with an Occult roll per Rank). A caster also runs out of material components if he rolls a Critical Failure.
- **Corruption:** Whenever a defiler rolls a Critical Failure on his arcane skill roll, he gains a new Minor Hindrance, or trades or upgrades a Minor Hindrance gained by Corruption for a Major Hindrance, that reflects his degrading mind and body. A defiler might become Jealous (Minor), for example, as he realizes how difficult it is to gather his power. Then Bloodthirsty (Major) as his rage turns to violent thoughts. These Hindrances last until the defiler's next Advance, at which time he may remove one Minor Hindrance, or reduce or trade a Major Hindrance for a Minor. This is in addition to his regular Advance.
- **Secret:** No beings are more loathed on Athas than Defilers, so great pains must be taken to keep their identities hidden. They begin with the Secret (Major) Hindrance.
- **Defiling:** Whenever a Defiler regains Power Points, they do so by draining life from the land around them, leaving behind a barren circle of lifeless, grey ash. Because of their careless disregard for life, they draw power more rapidly: defilers gain the Rapid Recharge Edge. In addition, when casting a spell the defiler may take a discount on the Power Point cost based on the level of plant life around them: -4 for Lush (very rare pockets such as a Sorcerer-King's Garden), -3 for Abundant (such as well-tended farmland or an oasis), -2 for Fertile (generally habitable land), and -1 for Infertile (hard scrub or stony barrens). Taking this discount reduces an area around the Defiler to grey ash, causing it to be permanently barren.

Defiler Edges

MASTER DEFILER

Requirements: Veteran, Arcane Background (Defiler), Spellcasting d10+
Beholden to no power but your own, you scar the land to fuel your ambition. Whenever you cast a spell gaining the discount from **Defiling**, you get a free reroll on the Spellcasting roll! In addition, you may apply the Fatigue modifier to your spells for only +1 Power Point, rather than +2.

ORB OF POWER

Requirements: Seasoned, Arcane Background (Defiler), Occult d8+
You have learned to channel your magic through an obsidian orb, using it as a conduit for even greater power. As long as you hold such an orb while you cast, you gain several powerful benefits: Your discount on spells from Defiling is increased by 1 as you siphon life from a wider area of plants; your damage-dealing spells all deal an additional d6 damage from dark, shadowy energy; and living creatures within 4" of you when you Defile become Vulnerable for one round as their own life force weakens.



DRUID

Druids are independent priests who ally themselves with various spirits of the land. A druid shares power with the spirit he worships, nurturing and protecting the geographical feature to which the spirit is tied. Although he has already chosen lands to guard and cherish, he may spend as much or as little time on his guarded lands as he sees fit. Learning the ways of the world will ultimately help him better protect his guarded lands.

- **Requirements:** Spirit d6+
- **Arcane Skill:** Faith (Spirit)
- **Starting Powers:** *Beast Friend, Elemental Manipulation, Shape Change*, and any other two from the list below.
- **Power Points:** 10
- **Available Powers:** *Arcane Protection, Banish, Barrier, Beast Friend, Blessing*, Boost/Lower Trait, Burrow, Darksight, Detect/Conceal Arcana, Dispel, Divination, Elemental Manipulation, Empathy, Entangle, Environmental Protection, Farsight, Growth/Shrink, Healing, Light/Darkness, Protection, Relief, Resurrection, Sound/Silence, Shape Change, Sloth/Speed, Slumber, Smite, Speak Language, Summon Ally, Wall Walker*
- **Miracles:** Druids may take Edges that require Arcane Background (Miracles).
- **Armor Interference (Minor):** Subtract 4 from Arcane Skill rolls and may not use Arcane Background abilities or Edges dependent on it when wearing more than 2 points of Armor or a heavy shield.
- **Vow:** Druids have a Vow (Major) to guard and protect the natural world, especially their guarded lands. If they willingly allow significant destruction to the natural order (GM's call), they subtract 2 from Faith rolls for a week. Catastrophic destruction might rob them of their powers entirely until they atone in some way.
- **The Speech:** Druids learn the language of the spirits of nature and can speak in a strange combination of animal noises that other Druids can understand perfectly. This allows them to communicate with each other and with all animals and other natural creatures (note that being able to communicate with animals also grants a +2 to Persuasion rolls with them).

Druid Edges

THE WANDERING

Requirements: Novice, Arcane Background (Druid)

During their wandering years, many druids travel far and wide to learn and commune with nature and teach and guide others as well. You ignore movement penalties from Difficult Ground and get a free reroll on Survival rolls. In addition, you gain the *Speak Language* power if you don't already have it.

GUARDIAN OF THE LAND

Requirements: Heroic, Arcane Background (Druid)

Within your Guarded Lands, you gain several powerful benefits. You automatically succeed on Survival rolls to forage. You may cast *teleport* as a limited free action without paying any Power Points, though you must stay within the Guarded Lands. You may also cast *invisibility* (self only) as a limited free action and extend its duration indefinitely as long as you remain within the Guarded Lands. Lastly, you regain Power Points automatically every hour without any need for prayer or ritual.

ELEMENTAL CLERIC

Outside the city-states, away from the bureaucracy of the sorcerer-kings and their templars, the most common type of priest is the cleric. All clerics worship the elemental planes and draw their magical energies directly from them. However, every cleric must choose one elemental plane as his focus of worship.

- **Requirements:** Spirit d6+
- **Arcane Skill:** Faith (Spirit)
- **Starting Powers:** *Elemental Manipulation* (own element only but see **Elemental Power** below) and any other three from the list below. All powers have the trapping of your chosen element.
- **Power Points:** 10
- **Available Powers:** *Arcane Protection, Banish, Blessing*, Blind, Boost/Lower Trait, Detect/Conceal Arcana, Dispel, Divination, Elemental Manipulation* (own element only), *Empathy, Growth/Shrink, Healing, Light/Darkness, Object Reading, Relief, Sloth/Speed, Smite, Speak Language, Summon Elemental** (own element only), *Warrior's Gift*. Plus:
 - **Air:** *Deflection, Farsight, Fly, Havoc, Sound/Silence*
 - **Earth:** *Barrier, Burrow, Entangle, Protection, Wall Walker*
 - **Fire:** *Blast, Burst, Damage Field, Darksight, Environmental Protection*
 - **Water:** *Beast Friend, Curse*, Drain Power Points, Resurrection, Scrying**
- **Miracles:** Clerics may take Edges that require Arcane Background (Miracles).
- **Elemental Power:** Elemental Clerics can only control or summon their own element with *elemental manipulation*, but they do so at greater strength: The volume of air, earth, fire, or water affected is tripled, the target of Push suffers a -2 penalty to resist, and the damage of Attack is increased to 2d6 (3d6 on a raise).
- **Vow:** Clerics have a Vow (Major) to guard and protect the natural world, especially their element. Their sins do not revolve around concepts of "good" and "evil," but rather are dictated by the needs of the land. If they willingly falter, they subtract 2 from Faith rolls for a week.

Elemental Cleric Edges

GRANTED POWERS

Requirements: Seasoned, Arcane Background (Elemental Cleric)

The elementals of Athas grant you greater power as your connection to them and to the land deepens. You get a free reroll on Faith rolls to invoke prayers of your elemental sphere and Elemental Manipulation. You gain a +2 bonus to Survival rolls made to navigate (Air), find food or track (Earth), protect yourself from heat (Fire), or locate water (Water). The range and duration of Elemental Manipulation doubles. You gain the *Blessing** power if you don't already have it.

TURN UNDEAD

Requirements: Seasoned, Arcane Background (Elemental Cleric)

Undead are products of The Gray, the home of the spirits of the dead, and are not part of the cycle of nature nor the Inner Planes ruled by the elementals. These unnatural beings are abominations and pose a constant threat to the living, and all clerics may use their element to destroy them. For 1 Power Point, all undead within a large burst template centered on the cleric take 2d6 damage, or 3d6 for 2 Power Points, from cleansing fire, holy water, crushing stones, or blasts of gale-force winds.

PRESERVER

The preserver is a wizard who seeks to maintain the environment while drawing magical power from it. In the give and take of spell casting, preservers have mastered the balance. A preserver's magical spells are cast in harmony with nature, and there is no damage to the surrounding environment.

- **Requirements:** Smarts d6+
- **Arcane Skill:** Spellcasting (Smarts)
- **Starting Powers:** *Detect/Conceal Arcana* and any four from the list below.
- **Power Points:** 10
- **Available Powers:** *Arcane Protection, Banish, Barrier, Beast Friend, Bolt, Boost/Lower Trait, Burrow, Confusion, Darksight, Deflection, Detect/Conceal Arcana, Disguise, Dispel, Entangle, Farsight, Fly, Growth/Shrink, Illusion, Invisibility, Light/Darkness, Object Reading, Protection, Shape Change, Sloth/Speed, Slumber, Smite, Sound/Silence, Speak Language, Stun, Summon Ally*
- **Magic:** Preservers may take Edges that require Arcane Background (Magic).
- **Armor Interference (Major):** Subtract 4 from Arcane Skill rolls and may not use Arcane Background abilities or Edges dependent on it when wearing more than 1 point of Armor or a medium/heavy shield.
- **Material Components:** Preservers require material components to cast their magic, just as Defilers do (see **Defiler** for details).
- **Arcane Study:** Preservers take the time to learn magic the proper way, careful with the energies they borrow from the land. They are faithful stewards of their charge, and thus prize breadth of knowledge and versatility over raw power. All preservers have the Wizard Edge.

Preserver Edges

VEILED ALLIANCE

Requirements: Seasoned, Arcane Background: Preserver, Connections (Veiled Alliance), Thievery d6+, must know the *Dispel* power

You have been inducted into the secret society of rebel preservers known as the Veiled Alliance. You do not take a Multi-Action Penalty when you cast a spell and use Thievery to disguise the spellcasting in the same round. When casting *Conceal Arcana*, you get a +2 bonus on the opposed Spellcasting roll against anyone using *Detect Arcana*. You gain a +2 bonus on any attempts to *Dispel* magic cast by a Defiler. Lastly, you learn the *Mind Link* power, with an additional feature: you may cast *Mind Link* without a specific target to "call" any other Veiled Alliance members within range; if one is present, it will link to them automatically.

SPELLWEAVING

Requirements: Novice, Arcane Background: Preserver, Occult d6+

Spellweaving is a catch-all term for the art of creating a disguised spell book. This may take several forms: a pattern woven into material, a network of knots decorating a robe, a series of etched designs in a brick, a painting on a reed mat, or decorative swirls on a staff. The limit to the kind of material and sort of artistic rendering is that it must be extensive enough to serve as a spell book and common enough to not be suspected as such. While in possession of such an item, each time you take the New Powers Edge, you gain 3 powers instead of 2. You also gain one preserver power of your Rank or lower immediately upon taking this Edge.

PSIONICIST

The psionicist uses the forces of his own mind to affect his environment. Psionic powers aren't magical in nature. Rather, they come from within the psionicist whose entire essence is in perfect harmony. What's more, psionic powers in no way affect the world's ecosystem other than by direct interaction.

- **Requirements:** Smarts d6+
- **Arcane Skill:** Psionics (Smarts)
- **Starting Powers:** Any two from the list below.
- **Power Points:** 10
- **Available Powers:** *Arcane Protection, Barrier, Beast Friend, Blind, Bolt, Boost/Lower Trait, Confusion, Darksight, Deflection, Detect/Conceal Arcana, Empathy, Farsight, Fear, Fly, Growth/Shrink, Havoc, Intangibility, Invisibility, Mind Link, Mind Reading, Mind Wipe, Object Reading, Protection, Puppet, Relief, Scrying*, Sloth/Speed, Smite, Speak Language, Stun, Telekinesis, Teleport, Warrior's Gift*
- **Psionics:** Psionicists may take Edges that require Arcane Background (Psionics).
- **Armor Interference (Minor):** Subtract 4 from Arcane Skill rolls and may not use Arcane Background abilities or Edges dependent on it when wearing more than 2 points of Armor or a heavy shield.
- **Hands Free & Silent:** A psionicist, unlike other Arcane Backgrounds, does not need to speak nor move their hands in order to use powers. Even if Bound or otherwise restrained and/or silenced, they may use their powers without issue.
- **Psionic Combat:** All psionicists may Test with their Psionics skill at a range equal to Smarts. This Test's effectiveness never diminishes from repetition. The Mentalist Edge applies to this Test.

Psionicist Edges

PSIONIC DEFENSE

Requirements: Seasoned, Arcane Background (Psionicist), Psionics d6+

You have learned to build your mental armor into a tower of iron will, creating a thought shield against a variety of attacks. Whenever you resist a Test or Power with your Smarts or Spirit, you may pay 1 Power Point before making the roll to add +4 to the total.

MEDITATIVE FOCUS

Requirements: Veteran, Arcane Background (Psionicist), Psionics d8+

You gain the ability to focus all your mental energy into a single power, causing that power to be strengthened. After meditating for one hour (during which time you recover Power Points normally), choose a single power you know. You now ignore up to 2 points of any kind of penalties when activating that power. This effect remains until you spend an additional hour of meditation to change which power is your focus. You may only ever have one power focused in this way at a time.



TEMPLAR

While the templars of Athas are technically a subclass of priests, their great power, superior training, and often twisted natures might surprise those who think they are anything like clerics or druids. Templars are the minions of the Sorcerer-Kings; their warriors, their city-guard, and the living symbols of their tyranny.

- **Requirements:** Spirit d6+
- **Arcane Skill:** Faith (Spirit)
- **Starting Powers:** Any three from the list below.
- **Power Points:** 10
- **Available Powers:** *Arcane Protection, Banish, Barrier, Blast, Blind, Bolt, Boost/Lower Trait, Curse*, Darksight, Deflection, Detect/Conceal Arcana, Dispel, Divination, Empathy, Entangle, Farsight, Growth/Shrink, Healing, Light/Darkness, Mind Link, Object Reading, Protection, Relief, Sloth/Speed, Slumber, Smite, Sound/Silence, Speak Language, Stun, Summon Ally*
- **Miracles:** Templar may take Edges that require Arcane Background (Miracles).
- **Secular Authority:** Templar are the elite class in their city-states; they gain the Aristocrat and Rich Edges for free.
- **Vow of Service:** Templar serve at the whim of their Sorcerer-King and their powers may be revoked at any time. They all have the Vow (Major) Hindrance to obey all commands of their master. Failure to obey this vow can result in whatever punishment the Sorcerer-King decrees, but loss of abilities for a week is common for even minor infractions. In addition, Templar operate the bureaucracy of the city-states in which they live; this functions as the Obligation (Major) Hindrance. Only the direct command of a superior can temporarily relieve a Templar of their duties without violating their vow of service.

Templar Edges

HIGHER AUTHORITY

Requirements: Veteran, Arcane Background (Templar), City's Blessing

As you rise through the ranks of the Templar, you enjoy more freedoms and fewer duties. You can now officially delegate most of your day-to-day responsibilities to lesser subordinates, reducing your Obligation (Major) Hindrance to its minor version. You may also command a favor of any lesser subordinate within the ranks of your city-state's Templar once per session, as per the Connections Edge.

At Heroic rank, your Obligation (Minor) Hindrance disappears as well, and you may command a favor twice per session. At Legendary rank, you gain a personal retinue of retainers; this functions as the Followers Edge, except you gain Templar instead of Soldiers, and they're fanatically loyal even to the point of sacrificing their own lives. Once per month, you may even gain an audience with the Sorcerer-King directly!

CITY'S BLESSING

Requirements: Novice, Arcane Background (Templar)

You gain a unique combination of Edge, new Power, and Hindrance based on your city of service (see below). In addition, while wearing the full uniform and vestments of your temple, you get a free reroll on all Faith rolls. If you already have the Hindrance, Edge, or both, then you may select equivalent replacements from any you meet the requirements for.

Templar of Each City-State

Balic: The templars of Balic are much like their wise, cruel leader, Andropinis. He delights in forcing legal loopholes and manipulating logic to his own ends. Most of his templars imitate Andropinis's behavior. This is done to impress their lord and to gain promotions when they become available. *Special Ability:* You gain the *Confusion* power, the Humiliate Edge, and the Arrogant Hindrance.

Draj: Tectuktitlay calls his templars "Moon Priests," as he calls himself the "Father of Life and Master of the Twin Moons." He claims that he is a god, that it was he who made the mud flats of Draj into a fertile haven for his cowering, worshiping creatures. Tectuktitlay is a cruel and bloodthirsty man and his templars are as well, out of necessity and the desire for promotion. *Special Ability:* You gain the *Drain Power Points* power, the No Mercy Edge, and the Bloodthirsty Hindrance.

Gulg: The warrior priests of Gulg are fanatically loyal to the sorcerer-queen, Lalali-Puy, and they believe she protects them from the city of Nibenay, with whom they are at war. The judaga are a class of warriors and nobles who behave much like rangers in the forest city of Gulg. *Special Ability:* You gain the *Wall Walker* power, the Woodsman Edge, and the Vengeful (Major) Hindrance.

Nibenay: The templars of the Shadow King are the most feared and terrible of all. They dress in black, like the dark and mysterious legends that shroud their master, and they wield terrible barbed spears made of agafari wood from the Crescent Forest. *Special Ability:* You gain the *Fear* power, the Menacing Edge, and the Ruthless (Major) Hindrance.

Raam: The templars who serve Abalach-Re are the most timid of the lot, but ironically, they are some of the most dangerous. Templars will only operate in large groups in Raam because of open defiance to the Grand Vizier. *Special Ability:* You gain the *Mind Reading* power, the Danger Sense Edge, and the Suspicious (Major) Hindrance.

Tyr: The templars who serve King Kalak pride themselves on efficiency. Tyr is one of the most functional bureaucracies in the Tablelands, despite Kalak's selfishness and recent distractions. The templars are calculating and emotionless, dedicated to their duty and without compassion. *Special Ability:* You gain the *Puppet* power, the Level Headed Edge, and the Code of Honor Hindrance.

Urik: The dread King Hamanu is the most warlike, ruthless, and arguably the most powerful of the sorcerer-kings. His armies have never met defeat when he led them, and his generals make war with a fanaticism born of knowing the price of failure. To be a templar under Hamanu is to train for war constantly. *Special Ability:* You gain the *Warrior's Gift* power, the Champion Edge, and the Overconfident Hindrance.



*NEW POWERS

BLESSING

Rank: Seasoned

Power Points: 10

Range: One town/community

Duration: One Year

Trappings: Prayers, chanting, festivals.

The people of the land depend on priests, shamans, and other caretakers to bless their communities. The caretaker must spend an hour walking about the town and its fields, channeling energy. The arcane skill roll is attempted afterwards. If failed, the caster must start over. With a Critical Failure, the priest may not cast a blessing on these subjects again for one year. If successful, the area's crops come in hale and hearty, sickness and disease are rare, and ravages of the land begin to heal. Over the course of the year, the relative abundance of the land will raise one level, to a max of Abundant. This has no effect on land that has been Defiled, nor on land that is completely Barren for any other reason.

CURSE

Rank: Seasoned

Power Points: 5

Range: Touch

Duration: Special

Trappings: Effigy, ritualistic words, touch.

Some practitioners of the arcane arts heal their allies. Others inflict sickness upon their enemies. The caster makes an arcane skill roll opposed by the victim's Spirit roll. Failure means the victim suffers a level of Fatigue immediately and at sunset each day thereafter (further castings of curse have no additional effect). The Fatigue cannot be recovered until the curse is lifted, and once the accursed becomes Incapacitated, he makes a Vigor roll each day to avoid death. **Breaking the Curse:** The curse can be lifted by the original caster and ends automatically if she's slain. Dispel also removes a curse (at -2), though each individual may only try once.

SCRYING

Rank: Seasoned

Power Points: 3

Range: Self

Duration: 5

Trappings: Images on a reflected surface, glowing eyes, a crystal ball.

Scrying allows the caster to spy on a distant target. Preparing the spell takes one uninterrupted minute while the caster focuses on a target item, creature, or location. This makes her Vulnerable and unable to take any other actions. If she's Shaken or Stunned during this time, the spell fails. If the caster has never seen the target herself, she makes her arcane skill roll at -2. Scrying is opposed by the subject's Spirit. If the target wins, he knows he's being spied on. If the caster wins, he can see and hear the target and the area around it but cannot move his perspective. With a raise, he can shift perspective and follow the target at a Pace 24. A scrying "eye" may be seen with detect arcana. It may also be dispelled (at -2 if suspected but not revealed).

SUMMON ELEMENTAL

Rank: Novice

Power Points: Special

Range: Smarts

Duration: 5

Trappings: Opening a gate to the Inner planes, animating a great mass of an element.

Summoned elementals are loyal to the elemental cleric, understand simple commands, and act on the caster's Action Card. They return to the Inner Planes when the spell expires. At Novice Rank, a Small Elemental may be summoned for 2 Power Points. At Seasoned Rank, an Elemental may be summoned for 6 Power Points. And at Veteran Rank and above, an Elder Elemental may be summoned for 10 Power Points.

EQUIPMENT OF ATHAS



MONEY IN THE TABLELANDS: Coin, trade goods, precious gems, barter, and the slave trade are all used in economic activity in the Tyr region. Whether buying goods in a city-state, trading in an elven market, or bartering with desert tribes, understanding these systems is as crucial to survival as understanding the heat of the desert.

COINS: All city-states craft their own coins from ceramic. A ceramic piece is the standard unit of wealth (prices in this section are all listed in CP), though they are not simple in practice. Every city-state casts their own and will not accept another city-state's for official payments; water can only be bought from the temple in that city-state's currency and templar will only accept their own currency as bribes. As a result, almost no one within a city-state will accept coins from another. Merchant Houses maintain stations in each city-state to exchange currency; for small amounts (under 100 CP), they typically charge a flat fee of 2 CP to exchange the rest one for one. For larger amounts, they often charge a 2% fee.

All ceramic pieces are kilned in such a way that they can be broken neatly into ten smaller pieces, known as "bits." One bit is therefore equal to 1/10th of a CP, and is commonly used for smaller purchases. When the templar have collected enough bits for it to be worthwhile, they are carefully counted and destroyed, and new whole CP are kilned to replace them. Every city-state carefully guards the exact formula for their unique ceramic and dye mixture to prevent forgeries. This plus the public execution of forgers in the arena generally keeps such attempts to a minimum.

Because metals of all kinds are so rare, precious metals aren't minted into coins. They are still used in trade and barter, but there is no consistent denomination or agreed-upon value. The wealthiest Merchant Houses sometimes use gold and silver to craft "medallions" with a specific, large denomination noted on them to serve as a sort of promissory note. These will generally be honored by

any other merchant house or even city-state, though they are generally reserved only for major trade agreements between such entities, not for use by common freemen.

BARTER: Many people on Athas don't have the means to transact in coin. Few desert tribes will part with anything for ceramic coins when they might never be able to exchange them. Even in the city-states, many people are so poor as to make even bits too valuable for their needs (unskilled labor in the city-states typically earns a person only two bits a week, for instance). So just as frequently as coinage, barter is used between entities in a trade.

Simple barter is easy enough. Protracted barter between a merchant caravan and a desert tribe may take hours or even days and can be a complicated affair. These negotiations are typically handled as **Social Conflicts** between negotiators on both sides.

When a player character wishes to haggle over a simple transaction, whether the price in coin or the value in a barter, a single opposed Persuasion roll will suffice. This is a common occurrence and making it more complicated than that can bog things down considerably.

PRECIOUS STONES: Gemstones and jewels can be found in a number of different environments and are valuable commodities. Their normal worth is increased by their value to spellcasters and psionics, and their universal appeal combined with compact size makes them a favorite of smugglers and people attempting to cut out the Merchant Houses. Possession of any quantity of gemstones is seen as very suspicious by many and is outright illegal in many city-states. Despite this, gems can be worth hundreds or even thousands of ceramic pieces and can be traded nearly anywhere – elven markets are especially interested in payment that is light enough to carry and they typically don't care how illegal it is.

STARTING FUNDS: Characters in *Savage Sun* begin with 100 ceramic pieces. *Changes to the Rich and Filthy Rich Edges:* In addition to the increase in starting funds, these Edges generate a monthly income of 500 ceramic pieces and 1,000 ceramic pieces, respectively. In order to receive this income, the character must work with the GM and decide the source of the funds, such as owning farmland, an artisan trade, or belonging to a professional organization. This may require the character to take other Hindrances such as Obligation or Vow – money doesn't just materialize out of thin air, especially on Athas. Should the source of the income be lost during the course of the campaign, the benefits of the Edge are lost and no replacement is made. If a player desires, they may choose to take these Edges solely for the increase in starting funds, ignoring the monthly income and its requirements.





WEAPONS: The typical Athasian warrior will be equipped with a spear and a shield; armor is seldom worn by the rank and file, except perhaps the most basic of leather covers for the torso. However, despite the primitive level of weapons and materials available on Athas, numerous innovative uses for those materials have been developed. The scarcity of metal and wood is replaced by the diverse array of creatures with natural weaponry of some kind that can be adapted to use as a manufactured implement. The people of Athas use spines, scales, fangs, hair, and all manner of other body parts from the dangerous animals of their environment to use as everything from kitchen utensils and construction tools to weapons of war.

These weapons often require materials harvested from dangerous creatures or in dangerous environments, and always require advanced training. Therefore, you won't see any armies marching equipped with Gouges; such weapons remain the tools of either cultures that embrace their use (such as the special weapons of the Thri-kreen) or, more frequently, Gladiators.

Alhulak: When using this hooked flail, you ignore any Parry or cover bonus from an opponent's shield. In addition, if you use the Disarm maneuver, the opponent is at -2 to the check to keep their weapon.

Cahulaks: This length of rope contains a hooked flail head at each end. It can be swung in melee or thrown. If used in melee, it ignores Parry and cover bonuses from opponents' shields, and can be used at Reach 1. Alternately, instead of taking advantage of the reach, you can attack with each end as if you were fighting with 2 weapons, but you cannot do both in the same round. If thrown, it has a range of 3/6/12 and can perform the Grappling maneuver at range instead of dealing damage.

Carrikal: This is an axe made from a sharpened jawbone, so both blades are pointed in roughly the same direction with a space between them.

Chatkcha: This tri-bladed throwing weapon is of Thri-kreen design. If thrown by someone with a d8 in Athletics or better, it returns to the thrower on a miss. Thri-kreen get this benefit regardless of Athletics.

Datchi Club: This long club is covered in sharp barbs and spikes made from teeth, sharpened roots, or insect stingers. It inflicts horrible wounds and is a favorite of arena crowds.

Dejada: This is a long, scooped basket fitted to a gauntlet or bracer. It is designed to hurl smooth stones at great speeds. No minimum strength is required to wield the Dejada, making it a favorite of Halflings. The Dejada uses Athletics to attack.

Dragon Paw: Short blades attach to either end of this staff. In the center of this double weapon is a guard with a protruding blade perpendicular to the staff. The light, middle blade (which serves as the off-hand end) can be used for quick jabs, ideal for a warrior with a roguish bent. When fighting with a Dragon Paw, you may fight with both ends as if you were fighting with Two Weapons.

Gauntlet Axe: Two blades are connected to either side of a heavy bone and leather bracer, enabling one fist to be both an axe and a small shield. The Parry bonus of this weapon does not stack with a shield if worn on the same arm.

Gouge: This spade-like weapon has a long haft with a handle on the end. The head is a wide, double-edged blade with a stabbing point at the top. Some gouges are fitted with a strap or a harness, making the weapon easier to carry.

Gythka: Each end of this Thri-kreen staff has a small, crescent-shaped blade with a centered stabbing tine. The secondary end of this double weapon is light enough to be used as an off-hand weapon. A gythka can be thrown like a javelin. If thrown, it has a range of 3/6/12, and if used in melee it can be used as if fighting with Two Weapons.

Lotulis: This short-staffed double weapon sports outward-pointing, barbed crescent blades on each end. It can be used as if fighting with Two Weapons.

Singing Stick: The ends of this 2- to 3-foot-long, narrow rod are carved to be slightly wider than the middle. It whistles as it spins in the hands of a proficient user.

Talid: Made from leather, chitin, and bone, this spiked “gladiator’s gauntlet” augments unarmed attacks. Other items can be held in the hand bearing a Talid, though a weapon or shield used in that hand means the Talid cannot be used. As long as the Talid is worn, it does not take an action to “draw” it. Though the weapon doesn’t significantly increase damage, it does mean the wearer does not count as Unarmed as long as they are wearing the Talid.

Tortoise Blade: This bony or chitinous plate is affixed with a short blade that points forward from the wielder’s hand. In addition to being a weapon, it functions as a medium shield.

Trikal: This pole arm projects three blades symmetrically lengthwise from its haft.

Whip: Though not generally a practical weapon, it is none the less often used by slave masters and gladiators alike. On a raise on the attack roll, may Entangle the victim instead of bonus damage.

Wrist Razors: This weapon consists of three sharp blades that protrude from a sturdy bracer, freeing the wielder’s hand. A shield cannot be worn on the same arm as wrist razors. Wrist razors do not need to be drawn, nor do they need to be sheathed for the wielder to use the hand the razors are on.

MELEE WEAPONS

Type	Damage	MinStr	Wt	Cost	Notes
Alhulak	Str+d6	d6	9	25	See notes
Axe, Hand	Str+d6	d6	2	6	-
Axe, Battle	Str+d8	d8	4	10	-
Axe, Great	Str+d10	d10	8	20	AP 3, Parry -1, 2 hands
Cahulaks	Str+d6	d6	9	25	2 hands, see notes
Carrikal	Str+d8+1	d8	5	15	
Club	Str+d6	d6	5	1	-
Dagger	Str+d4	d4	1	2	-
Datchi Club	Str+d10	d10	8	18	AP 1, 2 hands, +d10 damage on raise
Dragon Paw	Str+d6	d6	6	15	Reach 1, Parry +1, 2 hands, see notes
Flail	Str+d6	d6	3	8	Ignores shield bonus
Flail, Heavy	Str+d8	d8	7	15	Ignores shield bonus, 2 hands
Gauntlet Axe	Str+d6	d6	4	25	Parry +1
Gouge	Str+d12	d12	15	55	AP 3, Parry -1, 2 hands
Gythka	Str+d6	d6	5	20	Parry +1, Reach 1, 2 hands, see notes
Lance	Str+d8	d8	10	10	AP 2 when charging, Reach 2, mounted only
Lotulis	Str+d8	d8	10	30	Parry +1, 2 hands, see notes
Mace, Light	Str+d6	d6	3	5	-
Mace, Heavy	Str+d8	d8	6	12	AP 1
Maul	Str+d10	d10	8	12	AP 2, 2 hands, +2 to break objects
Pike	Str+d8	d8	14	20	AP 1 when set, Reach 2, 2 hands
Scythe	Str+d6	d6	7	18	2 hands
Singing Stick	Str+d6	d6	6	30	Parry +1
Spear	Str+d6	d6	4	2	Reach 1, Parry +1 if used in 2 hands
Staff	Str+d6	d6	4	1	Parry +1, Reach 1, 2 hands
Sword, Great	Str+d10	d10	6	50	AP 2, 2 hands
Sword, Long	Str+d8	d8	3	15	-
Sword, Short	Str+d6	d6	2	10	-
Talid	Str+1	-	1	50	see notes
Tortoise Blade	Str+d4	d8	14	10	Medium Shield
Trikal	Str+d8 +1	d8	12	35	Reach 1, 2 hands
Whip	Str+d4	d4	3	50	Parry -1, Reach 2, see notes
Wrist Razors	Str+d4	d4	1	8	see notes

RANGED WEAPONS

Type	Range	Damage	MinStr	Wt	Cost	Notes
Blowgun	3/6/12	d4	d4	1	2	Delivers poisons on any hit
Bow, Short	12/24/48	2d6	d6	2	30	-
Bow, Long	15/30/60	2d6	d8	3	75	AP 1
Chatkcha	3/6/12	Str+d6	d6	1	5	Returns on a miss
Dejada	5/10/20	2d6	d4	2	10	Athletics (Throwing)
Net	3/6/12	-	d4	8	20	Entangled on hit
Sling	4/8/16	Str+d4	d4	1	-	Athletics (Throwing)

Big Weapons: Half-Giants have difficulty using weapons of normal size. A weapon crafted for a half-giant (or a creature of similar size) costs twice as much, increases the minimum Strength by a die type, multiplies the weight by 8, and deals d10 extra damage on a raise instead of d6.

SPECIAL MATERIALS

In the resource-poor world of Athas, metal is as rare as a cool day. Even good-quality wood is in short supply in the desert where nary a tree can be seen. The denizens of the Tablelands have had to learn to make weapons from other (often inferior) materials. All weapons must be made of one of these:

- **BONE/CHITIN:** Bone from strong predatory creatures (including teeth) or the hard outer shell of giant insects like kank can both be sharpened to a knife's edge, but the result is brittle. Weapons made of these materials have their hardness reduced by 3 and if a Critical Failure is rolled on an attack roll with such a weapon, the weapon shatters. A bow may be made of bone but reduce range by 50%.
- **STONE/OBSIDIAN:** Stone weapons, including common obsidian weapons, are perhaps the most primitive of all. Stone weapons are three times as heavy and if a Critical Failure is rolled on an attack roll with one, it breaks.
- **WOOD:** Quality wood is hard to come by, but well worth it. A weapon entirely made of wood (such as a staff or a bow) does not break on a Critical Failure. A weapon mostly constructed of wood (such as a wooden spear with a bone or stone head) will still break on a Critical Failure, but is easier to repair: +2 on the Repair roll, and a successful roll creates a permanent fix rather than a temporary one. Wood cannot be sharpened to an effective edge, however. Quality wood weapons cost 10x the base cost.
- **METAL:** There is only one iron mine in all the Tablelands, and metallurgy is a primitive, underdeveloped science – bronze is made with arsenic and the fumes are toxic to all but the dwarves. Still, metal weapons fetch an understandably high premium given their durability compared to more primitive materials. Weapons made of wrought iron or arsenic bronze are +1 AP and do not break on a Critical Failure, although they are twice as heavy and cost 100x the base price. Metal also allows for more masterful artistry; for an additional 10x the cost of a metal weapon (so 1,000x the base cost!), a weapon of exceptional craftsmanship may be purchased that adds +1 to Fighting rolls made with it.



ARMOR: Due to the scarcity of good armor-making materials and brutal heat of the desert, full suits of armor are exceedingly rare. Instead, characters expecting battle are forced to wear whatever they can scrounge or survive in. It's not uncommon to see a warrior or gladiator in a leather breastplate, a bone vambrace on the left arm, a chitin greave on the right leg and nothing else. By default, it is assumed that an active combatant is positioning their body so receive blows on the most armored portion of their body. To strike an unarmored section, an attacker must make a Called Shot at -2 if the target is wearing 2 or fewer points of armor or -4 if the opponent is wearing 3 or more.

Minimum Strength/Vigor: Because heavy, thick armor can be a major detriment in the brutal environment of Athas, wearing even a little can be deadly under the burning sun. As a result, characters in *Savage Sun* must be both strong enough *and* tough enough to wear armor and survive – armor has both a minimum Strength and Vigor requirement. The penalties for having too low of a Strength die for the armor worn are the same as the base rules, but in addition, each die type difference between the character's Vigor and the item's Minimum Vigor inflicts a -1 penalty to Fatigue rolls against Heat.

Armor is not purchased in full suits; rather, characters scrape together what pieces of protection they can and assemble them into "piecemeal armor." The following chart organizes armor by broad category and replaces the Armor chart on page 69 of *Savage Worlds Adventure Edition*.

ITEM	ARMOR	MIN STR/VIG	WEIGHT	COST
Hides, Wood, Scraps	+1	d6	5	5
Bone, Scales	+2	d8	15	25
Shell, Chitin	+3	d10	25	50
Metal	+4	d12	35	10,000

Shields are typically made of wood, shells, or bone frames with hardened hide coverings. A metal shield (of any size) has +2 Hardness and +2 Armor against shooting through, and costs +500 cp.

ITEM	PARRY	COVER	MIN STR	WEIGHT	COST
Shield, Small	+1	-	d6	4	5
Shield, Medium	+2	-2	d8	8	9
Shield, Large	+2	-4	d10	12	20



OTHER GEAR: Common items found throughout the Tyr region are listed below. These prices are a baseline, but it's common for items to be more expensive depending on local and patterns of trade.

Item	Cost	Weight	Notes
Artisan's Supplies	75 cp	5	A separate set of supplies is necessary for each type of crafting: Alchemist's to make poisons and herbal remedies; Artificer's to cut gems or make obsidian orbs; Tailor's to craft leather or cloth goods; Woodcrafter's to make quality wooden items, etc.
Backpack	2 cp	2	
Bandoleer	5 bits	2	
Bedroll	3 bits	5	
Bell	50 cp	2	Metal item
Belt Pouch	1 cp	-	
Book	100 cp	5	Books are rare and often illegal
Bottle, Glass	2 cp	1	
Bottle, Clay	5 bits	2	
Caltrops, Bone	2 cp	2	Covers a Small Blast Template. Counts as Difficult Ground and anyone moving through the area must make an Athletics roll or be Shaken. A Critical Failure inflicts a Wound, with automatic Injury to the legs.
Caltrops, Metal	75 cp	2	As bone, but Athletics is -2
Candles	5 bits	1	Pack of 5
Cart	50 cp	80	
Chalk	5 bits	1	Box of 12 pieces
Crowbar, Jawbone	3 cp	3	
Crowbar, Metal	300 cp	5	+1 to Trait Rolls
Desert Clothing	5 cp	2	+1 versus desert Hazards
Disguise Kit	50 cp	5	+1 to Persuasion to impersonate
Fire Kit	1 cp	1	Flint and striker rock; no metal
Grappling Hook, Bone	5 cp	2	Can hold 200 lbs.
Grappling Hook, Metal	400 cp	4	Can hold 500 lbs.
Healer's Kit	50 cp	2	See <i>Savage Worlds</i> ; 5 uses
Hourglass	35 cp	2	
Ink	5 cp	1	Writing is uncommon and often illegal
Lamp	1 cp	2	Clay, wick and oil. Lamp oil is 1 bit per night
Lock, Wood	10 cp	4	Hardness 7
Lock, Metal	300 cp	5	Hardness 12, -1 to Thievery rolls to open
Magnifying Glass	100 cp	-	
Manacles, Wood	15 cp	2	Hardness 7
Manacles, Metal	600 cp	3	Hardness 12
Musical Instrument	5 cp	3	
Pick, Mining	5 cp	5	Made from Anakore claws
Pole, 12 foot	5 cp	8	Wood item
Rope, Hemp	2 cp	10	20 yards; can hold 300 lbs.
Rope, Giant's Hair	25 cp	10	20 yards; Hardness 15 and can hold 600 lbs.
Salve, 5 Doses	10 cp	2	+2 to Vigor rolls to recover from Heat hazard
Sealing Wax	5 bits	1	
Tack, Riding	25 cp	15	Includes saddle, bridle, reigns, etc. Riding a mount without this equipment imposes a -2 penalty to riding rolls. Double the price for each Size above 1, and triple the price if the mount is not one of the standard mount animals.
Tent, Canvas	10 cp	20	
Tent, Canvas Pavilion	100 cp	50	15 people can comfortably stand
Thieves' Tools, Bone	50 cp	1	Picking locks without tools imposes a -2 penalty
Thieves' Tools, Metal	900 cp	1	+1 to Thievery rolls with these tools
Torch	2 bits	1	
Waterskin	2 bits	-	

ANIMALS: The most common domesticated animals of the Tyr region.

Animal	Cost
Aprig	50 cp
Carru	100 cp
Crodlu	100 cp
Crodlu, Heavy	200 cp
Erdland	120 cp
Erdlu	30 cp
Gorak	100 cp
Hurrum	50 cp
Inix	100 cp
Jhakar	75 cp
Kank	120 cp
Mekillot	1,000 cp
Sitak	75 cp



POISONS: The use of lethal poisons is always illegal in the city-states, though quite widespread regardless. **Disabling:** These poisons dull one of the victim's attributes and all linked skills (chosen at the time of creation) by creating hallucinations, inhibiting nerve function, causing euphoria, etc. The affected attribute and skills are reduced a die type (two with a Critical Failure on the Vigor roll) for 30 minutes. **Delivery:** Poisons are delivered in several ways. In all cases, a being can't be forced to resist the same type of poison more than once per round. *Contact* poisons must touch bare skin. They can also be applied to a weapon and remain effective for four hours. *Inhaled* poisons are released by breaking their container. They form a Medium Blast Template cloud and affect everyone within. *Ingested* poisons must be consumed. The target may make a Notice roll to detect the poison's smell or taste before consuming. *Injury* poisons must be applied to a piercing or cutting weapon and are delivered when an attack isn't Soaked and results in at least Shaken.

Purchasing and Crafting Poisons: There is no open market for poisons, as their use is illegal in every city-state. However, elven markets do a brisk trade in many poisons. Characters with the Science skill can craft their own poisons with d6 hours of work per dose and half the cost in materials. A Critical Failure results in the poisoner poisoning himself! For double the time and cost, the poison can be made stronger (resisted at -2).

ITEM	TYPE	DELIVERY	COST	NOTES
Bard's Brew	Lethal	Ingested	250	-2 Notice to detect
Gray Dust	Mild	Inhaled	75	-
Ether	Knockout	Inhaled	300	-
Elf Tears	Disabling (Smarts)	Ingested	200	Not literally elf tears
Giant Scorpion Venom	Lethal	Injury	400	-
Gith Poison	Disabling (Agility)	Injury	150	-
Kreen Extract	Paralyzing	Contact	200	+1 Notice to detect
Laq Dust	Disabling (Strength)	Inhaled	225	Habit (minor) forming
Morg's Blood	Disabling (Vigor)	Contact	300	-
Twin Moon Draught	Disabling (Spirit)	Ingested	75	-
Urik's Pleasure	Paralyzing	Injury	100	-

SIEGE ENGINES & VEHICLES

TYPE	RANGE	DAMAGE	AP	BLAST	WEIGHT	COST
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Ballista	15/30/60	3d6	4	-	1,000	500
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A ballista is essentially a massive crossbow. Heavy Weapon, Reload time is 5 minutes for a solo operator, or 2 minutes with a crew of 2.

Catapult	24/48/96	3d6	4	MBT	30K	800
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Catapults hurl large stones at enemy defenses or ranks of troops. They require a crew of four to load the projectile, crank down the lever, then sight and aim it. Heavy Weapon, Reload time is every five minutes with a crew of 4.

Ram	-	3d6	-	-	400	1000
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A ram is a heavy wooden post used to batter objects, like gates or doors. It requires a crew of two to eight people. The leader makes the attack roll and others provide Support. Some rams are built over a single mekillot, which makes it a Heavy Weapon.

Siege Tower	-	-	-	-	200K	2000
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A siege tower is a massive wooden tower on wheels, designed for scaling walls. Moving the structure requires at least a crew of eight, who can push the device at Pace 1 from within the tower on the ground (double that if 16 individuals push the tower, and triple it if 24 push – these numbers become 1/2/3 respectively if half-giants are employed instead of humans or equivalent). Those within have complete cover and solid wooden walls until the ramp drops, usually at the highest level. Some siege towers may have arrow slits on the higher levels as well, allowing archers to fire as they approach the enemy walls.

Trebuchet	30/60/120	3d8	4	MBT	40K	1,000
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A machine that uses a hanging sling to sling heavier stones than traditional catapults. The boulders average 500 pounds, take at least an hour to load, aim, and ready. Heavy Weapon, Reload time is five minutes with a crew of 4.

VEHICLE	SIZE	HANDLING	TOP SPEED	TOUGHNESS	CREW	COST
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Caravan Wagon	6	-2	Half Animal	8	2+15	400
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Larger covered wagons pulled by teams of draft animals, either two inix or four kank. A Size 8 version can be pulled by a single mekillot and costs 600.

Chariot, Heavy	3	-1	Animal -2	9	1+3	600
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A heavy chariot is pulled by a team of four animals, typically heavy crodlu. The three riders can fire or attack from behind medium cover.

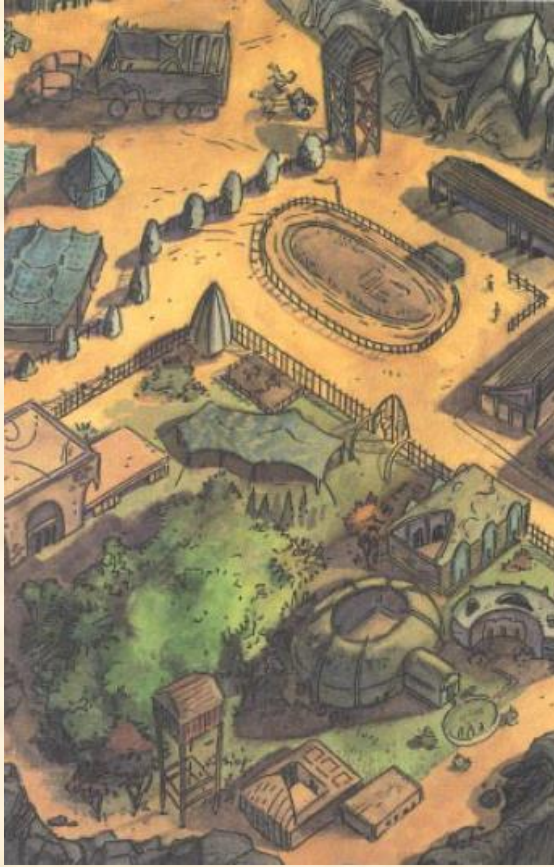
Chariot, Light	2	+0	Animal -1	6	1+1	250
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A light chariot is pulled by a single animal, typically a crodlu but occasionally others. The riders can fire or attack from behind medium cover as if **Mounted**.

Silt Skimmer	8	+0	10 MPH	12 (2)	6+6	25K
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A silt skimmer is a massive wheeled sailboat designed to navigate the raised pathways in the shallows of the Sea of Silt. They are difficult to master and dangerous to operate, but skilled crews can command great rewards from the trade available.

STRONGHOLDS



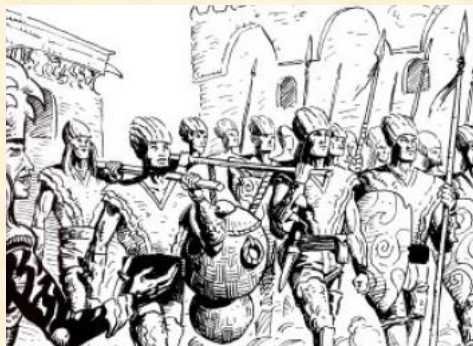
Survival on the harsh world of Athas is a constant struggle. A nomadic existence is a recipe for a violent death in the desert or destitution in the city-states. One way or another, the dream of many – to be realized only by a narrow few – is to carve out a place of one's own from the wastes.

This section provides the rules for player characters to achieve that dream, though not without great difficulty and constant struggle. More than just a reward for successful adventures, a stronghold becomes a source of adventure itself! Strongholds represent carefully shepherd resources, strategic advantages, or both – and those will be jealously pursued by many beings who will try to usurp what you've claimed.

The players earn a stronghold whenever the GM feels its appropriate to the story, but typically heroes of less than Veteran rank will quickly lose such a prize, so it's suggested that you wait until at least then to award a stronghold.

When you're ready to award a stronghold, follow the steps below:

- **STEP 1:** Roll (or the GM chooses) an Advantage.
- **STEP 2:** Roll (or the GM chooses) a Complication.
- **STEP 3:** Determine the stronghold's Form and how the players acquire it.
- **STEP 4:** Add any Upgrades the structure might already have when acquired.
- **STEP 5:** Determine the Stronghold's starting Attributes. The player characters will invest in the stronghold, guide its growth, and defend it from here!



STEP 1: ADVANTAGE (ROLL 1d6)

1 – Oasis: The stronghold defends or even contains a natural oasis or other source of natural water. As long as the inhabitants are careful about keeping the source clean and safe, it naturally replenishes and can support its inhabitants without needing to trade for water. Careful shepherding might even leave some left over to trade or sell! The stronghold's population capacity is doubled.

2 – Defensible: The stronghold is built in a manner or location that makes it unusually difficult to assail. It may be an underground fortress, a cliffside temple, or be constructed inside a narrow canyon. In any case, it is very difficult for invaders or intruders to overcome the natural defenses. The stronghold's starting Military Attribute (see Step 5) is increased by a die type.

3 – Trade Road: The stronghold is located along a major Trade Road. It may serve as an outpost for one or more Merchant Houses or it may simply command and defend a particular stretch of the important thoroughway. In any case, the Merchant Houses have a vested interest in order and security, and this location gives you access to resources, information, and potential allies. If the players choose to make a Resources roll to make a major purchase (see Step 5), the roll may be made *before* losing the die type. The results of the roll are the same. Characters who Earn during Downtime earn twice as much.

4 – Guarded Lands: Your stronghold sits within the Guarded Lands of a powerful druid. This druid isn't necessarily your ally, but if you properly respect the land and the druid, there are many advantages to being under such protection. You are less likely to face threats from defilers or raiders, for instance. The stronghold's starting Health Attribute (see Step 5) is increased by a die type.

5 – Valuable Resource: The stronghold or nearby land under its control produces exceptional wealth of some kind. Of course, rivals covet the stronghold's fortune and may attempt to steal or destroy it. The stronghold's starting Resources Attribute (see Step 5) is increased by a die type.

6 – Mentor: The base is managed by an exceptional individual. He or she might be a fighter-commander, a noble psionicist, a beloved relative of one or more party members, an amusing bard, an elemental cleric, or even a disembodied mind housed in an obsidian orb. The GM should create an appropriate Wild Card character and use him or her to support the team in their adventures. The stronghold's starting Harmony Attribute (see Step 5) is increased by a die type.



STEP 2: COMPLICATION (ROLL 1d6)

1 – City-State Client: Your stronghold falls within the territory of a nearby city-state that has long considered it a “client village.” The sorcerer-king does little to actually protect you, but taxes you all the same. All Resources rolls for this stronghold are made with a -1 Penalty (see Step 5).

2 – Contested: A powerful rival wants the stronghold for her own. She’s constantly attempting to take it by guile, force, blackmail, subterfuge, or even holy writ! This is usually a villain, but could also be a rival party of adventurers or even an unfriendly aristocrat such as an envious duke or templar with a petty grudge. The team gains the Enemy (Minor) Hindrance. The enemy might be powerful but only show up occasionally or may be less powerful but more frequent in its actions.

3 – Crumbling: The stronghold is falling apart. It may be old, was built poorly, lies on an eroding edge of the Sea of Silt, or suffered one too many attacks by raiding gith tribes. Doors stick, rats scuttle in the walls, grain becomes infested, floors slope at slight angles, or bits of masonry fall randomly. When rolling for Encounters, a roll of 5–9 indicates the Collapse result instead.

4 – Well-Known: The stronghold’s location is known by everyone. Strangers arrive almost daily to ask for help and it’s centered in an area likely to be a valuable target for raids or sieges. There’s always a crowd outside, including greedy thieves, enemy agents, those asking for spurious help, or those who are truly in need. When rolling for encounters, a roll of 2 through 7 indicates the Desperation result instead.

5 – Intruders: The stronghold is frequently attacked by rival armies, gith raiders, bandits, undead, etc. The building may sit above an old ruin, uncharted tunnels, or a place where The Gray is stronger. These foes occasionally find their way inside to cause trouble, steal treasure, or even attack. They may be bandits, paraelementals, a subterranean race, barbarian tribes, gray zombies, or some other horror. Whenever a Club is drawn for **Erosion** (see Step 5), the stronghold must make two Military rolls instead of one (with the second potentially being lower if the first failed). If your advantage is Guarded Lands, choose Crumbling instead.

6 – Defiled: At one point in the past, the stronghold was the site of a powerful defiler ritual. The effects of the ritual may be long gone, but the land in and around your stronghold is permanently barren and unable to support so much as a blade of desert scrub. The foul, lingering effects of the dark magic take their toll on the inhabitants as well – all Health rolls for this Stronghold are made at a -1 penalty (see Step 5). If your advantage is Oasis, choose Contested or Well-Known instead. If your advantage is Guarded Lands, choose Crumbling instead.

STEP 3: FORM

Now that the nature of the stronghold has been established, figure out its general form and appearance. Is it a warehouse in a Merchant House fort? An ancient stone keep hidden away under a mesa? A natural cave system high atop a cliff? A psionic academy? Whatever it is, the stronghold is large enough to accommodate the party’s personal quarters, mess, meeting rooms, and any Upgrades. If the team later changes their stronghold so that the current description no longer makes sense, the GM and players can describe an expansion, they can move to a new location, or whatever else fits narratively.

Acquisition: Next decide how the heroes came by their base. It might have come from conquest, a windfall inheritance, an order from a sorcerer-king to administer the place and the area around it, or the heroes might simply decide to buy or build such a place with some massive treasure they obtained some other way. Don't worry about the "cost" of the stronghold. Decide what makes sense for the group and their environment and use it as an opportunity to emphasize the flavor of the setting. If the heroes represent a new independent Merchant House from a distant city-state, for example, maybe they have to settle for a building in a seedy part of the new one. If the team are beloved gladiatorial champions, maybe an invested noble grants them a small tower overlooking the coliseum. Both reinforce the feel of the game and even create new adventure ideas. What do the heroes have to do to earn respect? Does the patron expect something in return? If the party is more villainous, maybe they took their structure during a raid or betrayal. Or perhaps they stole, forged, or bribed their way into a claim of a dead noble's estate (and whoever the real heir is wants it back!).

Strongholds are not typically acquired until the party is at least Veteran rank, so there's plenty of time for these events (or at least, precursors to them) to play out narratively in game. A central theme of the setting is "the haves versus the have-nots," and so having the players struggle and scramble against destitution before they've earned the right to a stronghold is very appropriate.

Maintenance: Large structures, such as keeps and castles, depend on many servants to handle day-to-day operations - castellans, maids, gardeners, chefs, groomers, castle guards, even loyal advisors. The players and GM should work together to understand and record the basics, naming any important staff members and giving them a few unique personality traits to make them memorable and unique. (You can use the Allied Personalities table in *Savage Worlds* for inspiration, if you like.) The cost to maintain the stronghold is reflected by the Attributes in Step 5. It might be maintained by the people it offers protection to (slaves or peasants who work the land) or covered by an agreement with the nobles who granted it. Financial matters might occasionally create adventures, however! Perhaps a spiteful Trader sets out to ruin his rivals' income so they have to vacate or sell their building. Or a shortfall forces the party to take a dangerous journey they'd otherwise avoid.

Because the people of Athas are so desperate for survival, it's nearly impossible for potential inhabitants and followers not to arrive once a stronghold gains a reputation as being even marginally safer than the desert around it. Very few people survive alone on Athas; people gather around perceived strength and try to make themselves useful enough to keep around. As long as the characters are not brutal tyrants, people will steadily arrive if not turned away until the stronghold reaches its capacity, which by default is around 200 people. This may itself be a source of adventure – how do the heroes balance the needs of the stronghold against those who would seek shelter within, when the latter may be a threat to the former?

Food, Water, & Other Supplies: All of these people need to eat, drink, and survive – and that's rarely easy on Athas. So where are all of these people getting their food and water?

If the stronghold is within a city-state or major village, it can be assumed that they're buying or trading for the majority of their supplies, which creates intrigue and adventure possibilities out of the interdependence. If the stronghold is more distant, then it must be near to farmland and at least partially rely on natural water sources like wells, though it may also trade for additional water if near a trade road. In any case, survival for any large group is on a razor's edge, and that provides endless inspiration for new dilemmas and adventures.

STEP 4: UPGRADES

Strongholds consist of personal living quarters, kitchens, meeting rooms, privies, and other basic areas by default. Anything else is an “Upgrade.” When the group earns an Advance, they may also add any one of the Upgrades below to their stronghold. It’s up to the party to figure out what to do if they can’t agree on which Upgrade to take! **Encounters:** Of course, there’s a price for owning something so valuable! Whenever you Upgrade your stronghold (no matter how you do so), roll on the Encounters table. If the party isn’t around for the encounter, the GM can send word of the event or save it for when they return as she sees fit.

STRONGHOLD UPGRADES

Agriculture: The surrounding land is developed to be more viable for farming, to better support the population. This Upgrade may be taken up to five times. Each time this Upgrade is chosen, the stronghold and community can support an additional 200 people and the gains a die type in Health.

Arena: The stronghold features its own arena, able to hold gladiatorial matches and other contests. If a gladiator on the party Earns in his own arena, he makes double if successful. An arena is also a popular addition; the stronghold gains a die type in Harmony.

Duelist: *Requires Training Grounds Upgrade.* A renowned fighter hones the party's martial skills. If a hero Trains with him (see Downtime), her Fighting increases a die type when activating her rerolls.

Dungeons: Small, secure cells in a secure part of the stronghold allow the party to hold prisoners. The number of cells grows as the castle grows (GM’s call). The dungeons are renowned far and wide, and individuals do what they can to avoid them. If the laws are generally fair, the people are more likely to be loyal and helpful. If the dungeons are cruel, the people are more subservient but rebels spring up from time to time to fight against such tyranny. Gain a die type in Harmony when this Upgrade is chosen, but major use of them requires a Harmony roll to see how the people perceive their use.

Great Hall: A large and impressive hall for feasting, meeting, or entertaining important guests. Antagonistic guests who abuse their hosts subtract 2 from Intimidation or Taunt Tests while within due to the hall’s grandeur.

Guards: The stronghold has a dedicated guard of about 50 soldiers, two officers, and barracks to house them. This Upgrade may be taken up to five times, doubling the number of soldiers and officers each time it’s taken to a limit of 800 troops and their officers. Each time this Upgrade is chosen, the stronghold gains a Military die type.

Hidden Entrance: Whether it’s the main entrance or a secret back door, the stronghold has a secure method that its members and even their mounts can enter and exit discreetly. It might be a cave snaking far under the building, a secret door into an adjacent warehouse, or even a permanent psionic gateway which teleports to a nearby ruin.

Hospital: The party has a medical facility with beds, supplies, and a dedicated healer (Healing d8). If this Upgrade is taken a second time, the healer is a Wild Card (Healing d10, the Healer Edge) and the hospital is large enough to accommodate local outbreaks. The stronghold gets a +1 to all Health rolls as long as the hospital is staffed and operational.

Library: Scholars can consult a few shelves of common but useful books. Anyone performing a Common Knowledge, Occult, or Research roll in the library gets one free reroll per attempt if the GM feels such information might be found within. If this Upgrade is taken a second time, the library is a room full of books with a few rare tomes—researchers add +2 to their rolls.

Master Archer: An archer of renown teaches ranged combat. If a hero Trains with her (see Downtime), her Athletics (Throwing) or Shooting (her choice) increases a die type when activating her rerolls.

Merchant Bazaar: An official hall is set aside for use by the Merchant Houses, enabling the stronghold to become a true trading partner. In addition to being able to gain supplies more easily, personal items can be purchased by the party at a 10% discount. As long as the bazaar is active and the stronghold is on good terms with the Merchant Houses, the stronghold gets +1 to all Resources rolls.

Mystic Workshop: A workshop characters can use to craft magic or psionic items.

Monument: This Upgrade may only be taken after a party member falls! A monument in a prominent location in the stronghold recounts her achievements and final sacrifice. Every member of the party increases their Spirit one die type permanently. This may only be taken once, no matter how many monuments are installed. When this Upgrade is chosen, the stronghold gains a Harmony die type.

Orrery: The stronghold contains a working, moving model of the Athasian planetary system, as understood by its most intelligent sages. It shows the relationship between Athas to the twin moons of Ral and Guthay, the sun, and to the planes of existence – The Gray and the elemental planes. A hero who Trains in this room during Downtime increases her Psionics or Spellcasting (her choice) one die type when she activates her rerolls.

Pious Priest: *Requires Sanctuary Upgrade.* A devout elemental cleric or templar attends the stronghold. Training with him (see Downtime) increases a hero's Faith one die type when he activates his rerolls as long as he is of the same persuasion (i.e. an elemental cleric would gain no bonus for training with a templar).

Shrine: The stronghold has a small temple. If this Upgrade is taken a second time it becomes a large temple with seating for a large congregation. Those who follow this faith add +1 to any Faith roll made within the stronghold. If this Upgrade is taken a third time, it becomes a cathedral with seating for a community, and undead are Distracted while on its grounds. A cathedral will also attract pilgrims and other devotees of that faith from great distances – for better or worse. Each time this Upgrade is taken, the stronghold gains a Harmony die type.

Stable Master: *Requires Stables Upgrade.* The heroes hire a veteran stable master to care for their mounts. After a few weeks training, the beasts' Fighting increases a die type.

Stables: The grounds contain secure stables for a dozen crodlu or other mounts. If this Upgrade is taken a second time, it contains stables and facilities (for training, treating sick animals, etc.) for up to 50 crodlu or 25 other mounts. If this Upgrade is taken a third time, the stables and facilities can hold a caravan (around 100 animals, plus caravan wagons).

Theater: A lively theatre open to the locals increases their happiness, contentment, and intelligence. A theater is an excellent means of communicating to the populace and keeping them happy; having one gives a +1 to all Harmony rolls made by the stronghold. If the theater is open to bards, then the party can Network within their own stronghold to gain information from neighboring areas.

Training Grounds: A dedicated training area increases the stronghold guards' Fighting or Shooting skill one die type (distributed as the players see fit). If this Upgrade is taken a second time, it increases the guards' Strength or Vigor one die type (player's choice). The third time this Upgrade is taken, the guards have any one Combat Edge for which they're eligible and the stronghold gains a +1 to all Military rolls.

Trophy Room: The heroes dedicate a room to relics of their most memorable battles. This Upgrade may be taken up to three times, representing new trophies that add a Benny to a special team pool. When this Upgrade is implemented, and at the start of each session afterward, the players should take turns being in charge of the pool. The player with this role can hand out these Bennies at any time, granting them as she thinks appropriate to her teammates (and even nonplayer characters).

Vault: Adds a secure room where the party can safely stash their treasures. The vault has a Hardness 10 door, and picking the lock suffers a –2 penalty. If this Upgrade is taken a second time, the door has a Hardness of 12 a –4 penalty to pick the lock.

Well: The stronghold has managed to secure or build a rare, functional well. It's not enough to support the entire community by itself, but the players can fill their own waterskins for free.

ENCOUNTERS (d20)

1—Time of Trouble: Roll twice and apply both results!

2—4—Desperation: People arrive in excess of the stronghold's population capacity. If the players don't deal with this directly, the GM draws a card and rolls the associated Attribute to see how the stronghold reacts to the excess, and how successfully.

5—8—Peace: Nothing troubles the stronghold or its rulers this time around.

9—Collapse: Some part of the stronghold collapses. The stronghold loses one die type in Resources.

10—Defend: Something threatens the stronghold directly. Anakore tunnel up from below, an enemy army is on the march, or spirits rise in response to some mysterious slight. Unless the players can deal with it directly, the stronghold must make a Military roll at -2.

11—Revolt: The locals are upset about something. They might have a genuine complaint that requires a diplomatic solution of some sort or there might be a true troublemaker fomenting dissent for his own nefarious ends. Unless the players can deal with it directly, the stronghold must roll Harmony at -2.

12—Shortfall: The stronghold needs money for maintenance, expansion, or some unexpected dilemma. The heroes must find a way to generate significant income. They might raid an enemy tribe, expand their territory somehow, delve into a dangerous ruin, or take on a mission for a wealthy patron, such as the templar, nobles, or Merchant House. If they can't, the stronghold rolls Resources at -2.

13—Bandits: Thieves, marauders, or rogue humanoids plague your kingdom. They might lie in wait along common caravan paths or wander about the land raiding villages. The heroes must personally confront some of the most prominent bands and dispense justice to forestall others. If they can't, the stronghold must roll Military *and* Harmony, both at -1.

14—Plague: A plague infects the people. The heroes must decide how to deal with it and dispatch their troops to enforce it. They may have to wait it out, bargain with a great healer for her service, or gather some rare cure from a dungeon or faraway land. If they can't, the stronghold rolls Health at -2.

15—Natural Disaster: A fire, sandstorm, landslide, or other natural disaster devastates a village or other population center, and unleashes some terrible new threat. The heroes must ride to quell this danger before it destroys what they've built, and perhaps fight some fiend responsible for the tragedy. The stronghold loses a Health die type and if the players can't respond effectively, the stronghold must roll Health *and* Military, both at -1.

16—Leadership: A citizen (or group of citizens) have a complaint or problem that must be resolved by the heroes. Perhaps it is a grudge between merchants over resource rights, a citizen accused of murder without any proof, or two families in a feud that threatens to become war. The stronghold automatically loses a Harmony die type if the players do not respond directly and effectively.

17—Rampage: Rogue creatures terrify the countryside. Locals are missing or have been killed and the populace cries out for help. A stalking tembo, a marauding braxat, or even a horrifying drake! The stronghold automatically loses a die type in all four Attributes every week until the players dispense with the threat!

18—Diplomatic Mission: A rival entity has a dispute with the heroes or their allies. The party is tasked with negotiating the issue somehow, perhaps performing a favor for the rival, uncovering his foul scheme, or finding a suitor for his headstrong son or daughter.

19—Marriage: A neighboring entity such as a Merchant House, noble dynasty, or desert tribe looks to cement a relationship with your stronghold. They propose a marriage between one of their sons or daughters and one of the player characters. Refusal may lead to suspicion or resentment.

20—Upheaval! The party's liege, mentor, or ally is slain. She might perish in some epic adventure, be the victim of an assassin or a coup, or have been put to death for crimes against a sorcerer-king. The heroes must now deal with the fallout and the changes in their own lives due to the shifting of political power structures and alliances.

STEP 5: ATTRIBUTES

The various aspects of the stronghold and the community it protects are abstracted into four Attributes. These four Attributes are used to track the relative levels of those qualities. They will increase as the stronghold improves those aspects and decrease when those qualities are damaged or diminished. By default, a stronghold starts with only a d4 in each Attribute, though various features from the other steps may have improved these totals.

Whenever a significant improvement is made to the stronghold, the GM may award an increase to an Attribute. For example, if the players secure a new trade alliance with a major Merchant House, that may increase Resources by one die type, or they may earn an increase in Military when a powerful earth cleric fortifies their defenses in exchange for saving his life. Stronghold Attributes are fluid; die types may be lost and gained multiple times. How the players earn the rewards is all part of the adventure!

Erosion: The desert is harsh, and most fledgling communities are swallowed by the sands before they get a chance to bloom. Each week, the GM draws a card and the stronghold must roll one of the attributes: **Harmony** (*Spades*), **Health** (*Hearts*), **Military** (*Clubs*), or **Resources** (*Diamonds*). On a joker, the stronghold gets a rare reprieve. This roll represents the day-to-day concerns of life trying to keep your corner of the world. If the players are active in the stronghold for the majority of that week, this roll also gets a Wild Die. Bennies or other player abilities may not be spent to affect the roll otherwise. On a failure, that Attribute decreases one die type; whenever an effect calls for the stronghold to “roll an Attribute” without further specification, this is what is meant. Until a stronghold is well-established, it hangs by a narrow thread! **All Attribute rolls suffer a -1 penalty for every 100 people (or fraction thereof) over the stronghold’s capacity.** The four Attributes and their uses are below.

Harmony: This Attribute represents the stronghold’s overall level of happiness, morale, and civic order. A stronghold with low Harmony does not have a deep sense of community or loyalty to its leaders, and petty crime may be common. With high Harmony, a stronghold’s inhabitants trust one another, believe the stronghold is worth defending, and may even make personal sacrifices for the good of the community as a whole. **When to use:** When there are great threats, impending dangers, or cruel treatment from the leaders, the GM may have the stronghold make a Harmony roll against losing a die type to fear or civil unrest. The players may also call for a Harmony roll to draft its citizenry into conflict – Military rolls get a +1 for the next month whether the roll succeeds or fails, but failure loses a Harmony die type as the people resent being conscripted. **Depletion:** If the Harmony Attribute ever falls below d4, there is uprising as the people either overthrow the leadership of the stronghold or (if they can’t), leave in a mass exodus. The players have one week to find a way to attract more people, stop the uprising, or otherwise regain one die type of Harmony or this spells the end of the stronghold!

Health: This Attribute represents the overall level of physical health of the community, and includes both the average personal health of the population as well as the practices that keep the community safe and well-fed. A stronghold with low Health has poor waste management or many sickly people, while one with high Health is robust and hale with good crop yields. **When to use:** When disease, natural disaster, or even sabotage threaten the health of the stronghold’s inhabitants, the GM may call for the stronghold to make a Health roll to see how well the community weathers the danger.

Depletion: If the Health Attribute ever falls below d4, the community has been stricken by plague or pestilence so severe that there may be no recovery. The players have one week to eliminate the source of the danger, find a cure for the epidemic, or otherwise regain one die type of Health or the stronghold is wiped out!

Military: This Attribute represents the military strength of the stronghold, both in terms of its defensive capability and its ability to protect or impose its will on nearby areas. A stronghold with low Military is vulnerable to attack or has limited strength at arms; even within a city-state this may represent a low number of poorly trained guards or agents or many spies and double-agents within the staff. A stronghold with high Military can protect itself from many kinds of threats and potentially even launch campaigns in the surrounding areas. **When to use:** Whenever the stronghold is threatened by outside forces, whether overt or covert, the GM may call for the stronghold to make a Military roll to see how well the Stronghold's defenses hold. If the stronghold's forces are involved in a Mass Battle, this is also the die used for the Battle roll by the stronghold's side unless one of the players is taking command directly. The players may also call for a Military roll if they wish to raid, tax, or otherwise secure resources from the surrounding area. Whether the roll succeeds or fails, the Military Attribute is decreased by one die type, as it is always costly to wage war. If the roll succeeds however, the Resources Attribute gains a die type. Lives are often cheaper – and easier to replace - than the resources obtained with them; such is life on Athas. **Depletion:** If the Military Attribute ever falls below d4, the community is defenseless. The players have one week to recruit new soldiers, repair crumbling battlements, or otherwise regain one die type of Military or the stronghold will fall to conquerors!

Resources: This Attribute represents the material wealth of the stronghold and community, reflecting everything from trade goods, infrastructure, and even water availability. A stronghold with low Resources can barely support itself, with its people eking out a subsistence on infertile farmland. Its vaults are sparse, and it has little to trade for valuable goods it cannot produce itself. A stronghold with high Resources is able to provide for its people and make improvements, trade for a wider range of exotic supplies, and weather greater dangers for longer. **When to use:** Whenever the stronghold needs to make a major investment in something, weather a drought, or pay tithes, taxes, or other such expenditures, the GM may call for the stronghold to make a Resources roll to see if the burden is especially onerous or handled smoothly. The players may also use Resources willingly in three ways: *First*, If the players wish to make a large or unusual purchase for their stronghold (perhaps they wish to buy a noble title or invest in a siege engine), they may spend a die type to make a Resources roll (with the new lowered Attribute). The die type is spent either way, but the purchase is only successful if the roll is. *Second*, any time one of the other three Attributes would lose a die type, the players may call for a Resources roll. If the roll is successful, the Resources Attribute loses a die type instead of the other Attribute. *Third*, the players may voluntarily expend a Resources die type and make a Resources roll (with the new lowered Attribute); if they are successful, they purchase a new Upgrade for their stronghold! (Don't forget to roll for Encounter as well!) **Depletion:** If the Resources Attribute ever falls below d4, the stronghold is destitute. The players have one week to secure new wealth, sell off assets, or otherwise regain one die type of Resources or the stronghold falls to ruin!



DOWNTIME

Adventurers sometimes have time between their grand trials and daily fights for survival. Some might spend it practicing their fighting techniques or crafting psionic items. Others may worship spirits of the land, try to earn a few bits in town, or even just socialize. When the Game Master decides there's "downtime" (generally a few days to a week), you can choose one of the following activities. Each provides a benefit of some sort, from financial rewards to progress in crafting or rerolls on select Traits. Narrate what your hero is doing then follow the instructions under each activity. Unless an option says otherwise, its effect may only be gained once regardless of how long the downtime lasts.

Taking advantage of these downtime activities requires that you have time to do so, which means you aren't spending every hour of the day just to survive – a rarity for many people on Athas!

- **Carouse:** Carousing characters spend their time socializing with friends, making new ones, or cementing relationships with their contacts. This usually involves considerable cost and time spent at local bath houses and taverns. During her Downtime, the character spends a total of 25 cp in food, drink, and entertainment. Double that for each Rank thereafter: 50 cp for Seasoned, 100 cp for Veteran, 200 cp for Heroic, and 400 cp if she's Legendary. In exchange, she gains a local favor she can call in at any time. The greater her Rank and her overall standing in the community (GM's call), the greater the favor.
- **Earn:** The hero earns currency in some way. Perhaps he takes on odd jobs, kills rats in the local well house, or even "procures" it from the local thieves' guild! The hero must make a relevant skill roll to earn her reward—Thievery for scoundrels, Fighting for gladiators, Performance for bards, etc. Use an appropriate attribute for more mundane jobs. A Critical Failure means the character doesn't make any money and takes Fatigue from Bumps & Bruises. Failure means she doesn't make any money and embarrasses herself somehow. Success earns her 10 cp if she's Novice rank, 20 cp if Seasoned, 30 cp if Veteran, 40 cp for Heroic, and 50 cp if she's Legendary. Double the reward with a raise. Characters with a Rogue or Warrior Edge can take on more dangerous work: double the reward, but on a Failure they can no longer Earn for that kind of work in this area in the future until they gain at least one Rank (in addition to the other penalties), and a Critical Failure also inflicts d4 Wounds, plus potentially other ramifications depending on the nature of the work.
- **Enchant:** Characters with the Artificer Edge can spend their downtime creating holy, magical, or psionic items. This requires at minimum Artisan's supplies, but a true Mystic Workshop enables the creation of more permanent items of power. The character must expend reagents such as cut gemstones, obsidian orbs, or unusual plants equal to half the value of the item to be created to even begin the process. Such items may be very difficult to procure, requiring an adventure in itself or at least several visits to an elven market. Each week, the character makes an Occult roll. A success results in 1,000 cp worth of progress toward the item's completion, or double on a raise. A failure means no progress is made that week, with a Critical Failure setting the character back 500 cp. Unless you own the Mystic Workshop, its use plus room and board costs 50 cp per week regardless of progress you make, and in many cities is either illegal or requires a license.

- **Research:** A character can spend her Downtime developing or learning new powers. This doesn't permanently give her a power, but allows her to use any power, spell, or miracle from her Available Powers list and of her Rank or lower for one entire encounter. The character may also temporarily change the Trapping of a power she already has for one encounter—turning a fireball into an ice blast, for example. The spell is cast at a –2 penalty but is otherwise treated just like one of the caster's regular powers. This can be particularly useful if the mage or priest must prepare to face a threat with a particular weakness. Finally, Research can also be used to reveal deep information about a particular subject. No Trait roll is required. The GM decides just how much the investigator can learn in a week given the topic, the location, and resources at hand. In order to choose this option, unless someone else is providing for your needs, you'll need to pay an average of 10 cp for lodging, food, and water for the week. (Note: only characters with an Arcane Background can learn new powers this way, not Wild Talents or Rangers, etc.)
- **Rest:** Those who have suffered grievous Wounds might need to rest during Downtime to recover their health. Use the **Natural Healing** rules during the week. Any healers in the group can provide **Support**, as can other allies or hired professionals such as elemental clerics or physicians in a noble's employ. Regardless of the outcome, resting characters gain one Benny. In order to choose this option, unless someone else is providing for your needs, you'll need to pay an average of 10 cp for lodging, food, and water for the week.
- **Survive:** Unless your basic food and water needs are already met, this is the only Downtime activity you can select. You eke out subsistence by catching small rodents, devouring their flesh, and trading the bones for a few sips of water. You become **Fatigued** simply from living like this, but it's all you can do until your circumstances change – for better or worse.
- **Train:** An adventurer can practice a specific skill or attribute to temporarily increase its effectiveness. A character might train Fighting by sparring with a retired gladiator, Persuasion by debating in the forum, Occult by meeting a defiler in secret, Strength or Vigor with vigorous exercise, and so on. The character must possess at least d4 in any skill chosen for training. Afterwards, she gets a free reroll when failing that skill or attribute for one entire encounter. This stacks with any other rerolls she may have from other sources. The player chooses when to activate her rerolls as a free action. If she Trains again, the previous focus is lost. In order to choose this option, unless someone else is providing for your needs, you'll need to pay an average of 10 cp for lodging, food, and water for the week, plus whatever the trainer chooses to charge.
- **Worship:** You pray and offer penance at a sorcerer-king's temple, an elemental shrine, or a sacred grove. Spending significant time immersed in religious rites gives you a more solid, stable connection the source of your worship. For the next week, you do not suffer **Dynamic Backlash** if you roll a Critical Failure with a miracle. In order to choose this option, you must either have your own food, water, and shelter provided for or you must tithe 5 cp to the temple and perform small tasks of service such as cleaning.

THE TYR REGION – SOCIETY AND ECONOMY

The Tyr region has a complex and stratified society, driven by the scarcity of resources, the prevalence of both natural and supernatural dangers, and the extreme inequality in power and wealth between the highest and lowest levels. Besides the tyrannical Sorcerer-Kings and their Templar, the great Merchant Houses, and the desert tribes, one other major force affects all life in the region in one way or another – The Dragon.

The Dragon of Tyr is the only being of its kind and is by vast leagues the most powerful being on Athas. His domain, Ur Draxa, is far to the east beyond the Sea of Silt, and no living resident of the Tyr Region has seen it, and so legends and tales grow wildly about its horrors. Once each season, the Dragon makes rounds to each City-State to demand a tithe of slaves under threat of the destruction of the entire city, and not even the Sorcerer-Kings are powerful enough to refuse. The time of the Dragon's shadow passing over the desert is an omen of terror; the Dragon is not above plucking a meal out of the wastes if it so pleases him, and where his shadow falls only death remains. His very presence causes children to die and plants to wither, food to spoil and water to boil away. His origins are unknown and his motives inscrutable, but he is the Great Threat that looms in the background of all life on Athas, and especially upon the motivations and actions of the Sorcerer-Kings.

Even if the Sorcerer-Kings were content to rule over their chosen domains (which they most certainly are not), the constant need to tithe great numbers of slaves forces them to constantly reach into the desert and often come into conflict with one another. Open warfare in the desert is extremely difficult given the cost in resources to feed and move an army under the crimson sun, but the alternative to paying such a cost is to fail to pay the Dragon's tithe, and there are entire ruined City-States, devoid of all life and half-buried in the sands that stand testament to how foolish that is.

In turn, these factors (as well as the ordinary concerns of survival and prosperity for any society) drive the economy of the region.

Each City-State stands upon (and controls) a source of water sufficient to keep its populace alive and its farms functional. Access to this water is tightly controlled by the Templar and forms the foundation for the currency of each City-State. Each casts its own currency out of ceramic. The standard exchange that forms the foundation of the entire economy is that in each City-State, one coin can be traded to the Templar for ten gallons of water. This is fundamentally the "tax" of each City-State and ensures that all citizens must engage in productive economic activity – or die of thirst beneath the brutal sun.

Ranks of nobility exist within the City-States, usually as feudal landowners. Only by decree of the Sorcerer-Kings may someone own land, but in order to make that land valuable, even the nobility must purchase their water from the Templar. This ensures the loyalty of the noble class, but they in turn are often brutal landlords. They may levy taxes, impose rules, or control their tenants as they see fit. There is also a great deal of intrigue between the noble houses, creating a combative political environment.

Free citizens exist, but often on the razor's edge. They must ply trades or otherwise find productive ways to earn enough to pay their rents, purchase their water, and buy the other necessities for survival. This is difficult at best and falling into debt nearly always results in slavery or the arena. The middle class is a non-existent concept on Athas.

Alliances between the City-States are non-existent. Each Sorcerer-King is a rival to the others, and each City-State fundamentally competes for the same scarce resources. Therefore, no City-State directly trades with any other, and will certainly not accept another's currency. Instead, the City-States and their citizens trade with the Merchant Houses, neutral organizations that exchange currency, move goods, and arbitrate trade between the different societies. This gives the Merchant Houses great political power that exists in a careful balance with the power of the Sorcerer-Kings themselves. The situation is volatile, and trade wars, sanctions, blockades and other economic conflict is common.

Outside of these two major economic players are a wide variety of smaller ones. Some cities not ruled by Sorcerer-Kings exist, and a few are almost as grand. In addition, there are hundreds of smaller villages, settlements, and outposts. Many of these are vassals of the nearest City-State, while others are independent and still others are contested between two or more.

Due to the scarcity of resources and the difficulty of farming, there are also many nomadic tribes of desert-dwellers. Elf tribes are the most commonly pictured, but all races have their own nomadic tribes. Some are raiders, others are simply foragers, but a great many are what are known as "Slave Tribes."

Slave Tribes are cultural conclaves that survive by providing set amounts of slaves from their own ranks to City-States or Merchant Houses at particular (usually yearly) intervals, in exchange for freedom and protection otherwise. They bear their own traditions, cultures, markings and practices, and many create great cultural significance around the noble sacrifice of some of their members in order to ensure the survival of the rest. Dwarves and humans are the most common Slave Tribe races, but on occasion others may be encountered.

THE CITY-STATES AND THEIR SORCERER-KINGS

- Tyr, The Iron City. Tyr is the oldest city (though now no more powerful than others) is ruled by King Kalak. Though obsessed with building his grand Painted Ziggurat of late, Kalak owes much of Tyr's historic power to a tightly-controlled iron mine, one of the only ones of its kind.
- Balic, City of Sails. A wealthy mercantile City-State on the shores of the Estuary of the Forked Tongue, Balic is ruled by Dictator Andropinis. Balic claims to have great democratic traditions and both Templar and Andropinis face regular elections, though of course they never lose.
- Draj, City of the Moons. Draj is a backwater city-state held firmly in the grasp of a mad sorcerer-king, Tectuktitlay, The Father of Life. Draj has never known peace, for warfare and conflict are among its highest ideals. Their worship of their Sorcerer-King is among the most fervent.
- Gulg, The Forest City. Built within walls surrounding one of the few true forests on Athas, this city is ruled by The Oba: Lalali-Puy, Mother of Trees. Isolationist even by City-State standards, Gulg has a rich culture but an extremely narrow hierarchy in which The Oba controls all.

- Nibenay, City of Spires. Ruled by the Shadow King who named the city after himself, Nibenay considers itself the last refuge of civilization among the barbarians. Nearly all power is in the hands of competing nobles and Templar, as Nibenay secludes himself in arcane studies.
- Raam, City of Unrest. Raam is on the verge of disaster, as Vizier Abalach-Re has thrived on conquest and hedonism as her once-magnificent alabaster spires crumble and her people starve. Even more strangely, the queen has invented and mandated worship of her own deity.
- Urik, The City of Lions. Hamanu, The Lion of the Desert, calls himself The King of the World, and few can contest him. Urik's legions have never met defeat, owing to a highly organized and militarized society in which the Legion is supreme and all obey Hamanu's Code in all things.

THE MAJOR MERCHANT HOUSES

- House Inika is small in comparison to the other houses, but that's because they value efficiency and shrewdness. They deal in small, valuable and exotic goods like gemstones, artifacts, and spices. Their caravans are small and fast, and they have a reputation for swift deals.
- House M'ke trades primarily in metal, food, crafted weapons and obsidian. They are a typical Merchant House, though they maintain a number of heavily guarded routes that do not appear to lead to any major trading centers.
- House Shom made its fortune in rice, and that remains their backbone. Other goods include wood and wooden weapons as well as art objects, decorations, and the kinds of building materials coveted by nobles.
- House Stel is a militant house that sells weapons, ceramics, iron, obsidian, gold, hides, and mercenaries. They maintain the largest army of all the merchant houses, and there are rumors of them dealing in stolen goods and making bargains with elf tribes and raiders.
- House Tsalaxa is the most ruthless and underhanded of the houses. While they deal in hemp and grain, their primary trade is slaves, including monsters and exotic races captured from the wastes. Rumors persist that they will also deal in goods outlawed in City-States, like poisons.
- House Vordon deals primarily in fabrics and silk, but also in building materials and lost artifacts or treasures from the desert. Scouts from House Vordon are frequent treasure-hunters in the ruins of forgotten cities and often smuggle such things along with more mundane goods.
- House Wavir deals in grain, ceramics and precious metals, but it is unique in several ways. Wavir maintains its own city, and both the city and the house were founded by ex-slaves and gladiators. As a result, House Wavir employs no slaves and will not deal in their trade.

OTHER FEATURES OF THE TYR REGION

What remains of Athasian civilization is cupped in the broad plains and deserts between the mighty Ringing Mountains and the impassable Sea of Silt (impassable by all but the Dragon of Tyr, that is). In addition to the City States, what follows are some of the other major features, landmarks and areas.

- **Estuary of the Forked Tongue.** A great arm of the Sea of Silt that nearly slices through the Tyr Region, the Estuary of the Forked Tongue is home to dozens of small villages, trading posts, and nomad camps. This inlet reaches well over four hundred miles from the isle of Waverly at its

mouth to the trading town of Altaruk at the head of its northern arm; the City-State of Balic sits near the midpoint of the Forked Tongue. The estuary serves as a trade route for silt schooners out of Balic, and many of the villages and tribes here fall under the influence of Balican nobles.

- **The Forest Ridge.** Rumors and reports filter across the Tablelands, whispers about a vast and untamed wilderness beyond the Ringing Mountains where rain falls every day and trees grow so tall and thick that the sun struggles to shine through the canopy. Most Athasians doubt that such a fantastical place could exist on their dying world, but the legends persist.
- **The Ivory Triangle.** Lying in the center of the Tyr Region, the Ivory Triangle is a crossroads and a wasteland. Most of the area is desolate, home only to monsters and desert raiders, but it sits astride the trade routes from the cities of Raam and Draj in the north to rich Balic in the south. Every day, gigantic mekillot-drawn argosies and fleetfooted kank or crodlu pack trains make their way across the blistering salt flats. The rival city-states of Gulg and Nibenay are found in the Ivory Triangle; they lie in a narrow verdant strip along its northern edge at either end of the Crescent Forest—one of the last lowland forests on Athas.
- **The Ringing Mountains.** The mighty Ringing Mountains, the greatest mountains known on Athas, form the western border of the Tyr Region. The highest peaks in the range reach more than 20,000 feet in elevation, and even the lowest passes are a good 12,000 feet above the lowlands. Despite the brutal heat and aridity of the deserts below, a glimmer of snow and ice clings to the highest spires, visible from a hundred miles away. The high vales are home to reclusive monasteries, isolated clans of mountain herders, tribes of fierce tarek raiders, and a wide variety of dangerous predators such as rocs, kirres, and braxats. No Sorcerer-Kings have tried to conquer the mountains, and for good reason. The cold and the thin air are brutal on soldiers, the passes are impossible for heavy wagons and lowland draft beasts, and the mountains are protected by the ancient primal wards of the halflings.
- **The Road of Kings.** Far to the north, beyond the Great Alluvial Sand Wastes and crowning the punishing barrens of the Tablelands, stretches the Road of Kings, a war-torn, shattered land defined by the ambitious Sorcerer-Kings who vie for dominance in the region. Three City-States dominate the Road of Kings, each straddling the ancient routes. Quarrelsome and greedy, they frequently war with one another, as scorched battlefields and countless bones testify in the haunted lands between them. In the west, one finds mighty Urik, a proud and powerful city-state whose armies have no match among the Seven Cities. Traveling east, past the Dragon's Bowl, one comes to the troubled city of Raam, beset by strife and famine. Beyond tragic Raam, far to the east, stands proud Draj. Blessed with abundant fields, Draj supplies food to other cities through the Merchant Houses, transporting grains and hemp to far-flung markets while its bloodthirsty warriors scour the wilds for captives to sacrifice on their king's altar. In the empty stretches between Urik, Raam, and Draj, caravan routes, herder trails, and ancient highways link the three city-states together.
- **The Sea of Silt.** The Sea of Silt is a great dust sink that extends for hundreds, perhaps thousands, of miles eastward from the shores of the Tyr Region. Long ago it was a great sea of water, vast and deep, but now the shore slopes down to meet what looks like an endless plain of gray dust. On a calm day, it seems that one could walk out onto the plain as if it were fine

sand, but the silt is too light to support a human's weight and too deep to wade for any distance. The Sea of Silt is an impossible barrier to travel, passable only along its margins by silt skimmers or waders that remain in shallow dust. In addition to natural hazards, those who brave the sea must contend with the monstrous creatures that dwell in and around the silt. Tentacled silt horrors prowl the deeps, and giants roam the shallows, walking on secret roads only they know. Even the islands in the Sea of Silt offer as much peril as safe haven. Their isolated locations make them ideal hideouts for unscrupulous types who don't want their activities to be observed, and the austerity of life on the islands turns many inhabitants to savagery.

- **The Southern Wastes.** The Tyr Region is rimmed by the Ringing Mountains to the west and the Sea of Silt to the east, but to the south is nothing but desert—a vast desert that never ends, as far as anyone knows. As one travels south from the shores of the Estuary of the Forked Tongue, villages and outposts peter out to wild lands where only a few lonely nomads roam. Beyond that, the traveler comes to silent, empty lands where no one lives at all, and even the vicious predators that haunt the deserts of the Tablelands and the Ivory Triangle grow few and far between. These are the Southern Wastes, a desolate expanse that in all likelihood girdles the rest of the world. The wastes have no verdant areas or oases large enough to support a city. In fact, the desert takes on a capricious, elemental character as one ventures farther south. Just as the Sea of Silt is an incursion of elemental power into the world, the Southern Wastes are home to other sorts of incursions: mazes of wind-carved canyons, plains of smoking ash, forests of stone columns that drift with the gusts, rivers of fire, seas of salt, and more.
- **The Tablelands.** Stretching from the foothills of the Ringing Mountains to the Great Ivory Plain and from the Lost Oasis to the Dragon's Bowl, the Tablelands are a vast territory of sand, stone, and scrub plains. The picturesque mesas and buttes for which the region is named jut from the plains or rise like broken ramparts from the badlands, painted in broad striations of orange, yellow, and ocher. These ancient lands, inhabited by a wide variety of almost all the speaking peoples of Athas, hold dusty trading posts, hidden villages, and crumbling ruins. When city-dwelling Athasians think of deserts and desert people, they usually picture the Tablelands and its denizens. In fact, some city residents use the term "Tablelands" to describe everything between the Ringing Mountains and the Sea of Silt.



THE ATHASIAN CALENDAR

Athas's Calendar is divided into two cycles. The Endlean Cycle is 11 years, and marks the amount of time between when the two moons, Ral and Guthay, meet in an eclipse. The Sofean Cycle is more abstract, but represents seven stages.

Each year is a pairing of the two, in order, with the each cycle repeating independently. So the first year of a cycle is always Ral's Fury, and the second year is always Friend's Contemplation, etc. The cycle thus repeats every 77 years, a period known as a King's Age (formerly World's Age, in ancient times). The last year is always Guthay's Agitation, etc.

Endlean Cycle

Ral

Friend

Desert

Priest

Wind

Dragon

Mountain

King

Silt

Enemy

Guthay

Sofean Cycle

Fury

Contemplation

Vengeance

Slumber

Defiance

Reverence

Agitation

It is currently the 190th King's Age, since the start of the reckoning of years by this calendar (over 14,000 years ago). It is the year of Priest's Defiance.

A year is 375 days. A year has three seasons, each with 4 30-day months and a 5-day festival week in the center.

High Sun

- Sorrow
- Smolder
- Festival of the Highest Sun (start of the year)
- Scorch
- Morrow

Sun Descending

- Rest
- Gather
- Festival of the Cooling Sun
- Breeze
- Mist (the last day is called Lowsun, and is the midpoint of the year)

Sun Ascending

- Bloom
- Haze
- Festival of the Soaring Sun
- Hoard
- Wind

“Year of the Messenger”

Every 45 years, a brilliant comet can be seen in Athas’s skies. The next year should be Enemy’s Slumber, in 7 years in King’s Age 190.

The Moons

Ral – 3 Day Rise/Set Cycle, 25 Day Phase Cycle

Guthay – 5 Day Rise/Set Cycle, 15 Day Phase Cycle

One “quinth” (a fifth of an Athasian year) coordinates all 4 lunar cycles, starting new at both moons rising, and full. The lunar cycles are not used to track time; rather, they are used to cast omens, predict portents, and (more practically) know the relative lighting conditions during the night.

Putting It All Together

Formally: Today is the 25th day of Mist, in the year of the Priest’s Defiance, of the 190th King’s Age. Both Ral and Guthay slumber this night, and we are five days from the Lowsun, when Ral and Guthay will darken completely.

Informally: Mist 25th, 190th Priest’s Defiance.



LIFE IN THE DESERT



In this section are special notes and modifications that will apply to three common events player characters will encounter in the savage world of Athas: **Survival in the Desert**, **Navigating an Elven Market**, and **Arena Combat**.

SURVIVAL IN THE DESERT

Travel and survival in the harsh lands outside of the City-States requires tremendous skill and no small amount of luck. Each day is a race against brutal temperatures, shortages of food and water, and violent predators. Landmarks can be difficult to find, and time is not on your side.

Each day of travel requires, at a minimum, three tasks: Navigation, Lookout, and Overcoming Obstacles. Three additional tasks may be required: Foraging (if ample supplies are not already available, as is often the case), Scouting (if you wish to avoid detection, a common concern) and Handling (for mounts or vehicles, if any). Each of these tasks is best performed by a separate person; for each task the same person performs, that person gets a cumulative -1 penalty to all actions. Braving the wastes alone is rarely a good idea. These tasks rely on the **Quick Encounters** and **Travel** rules to adjudicate the results.

These rules all assume that the party is traveling during the day. In addition to these checks, note that each character must make a check against the **Heat Hazard** for every four hours of travel during the day. Most parties won't travel for more than eight hours in a given day – making and breaking camp, finding

noonday shelter, eating and other tasks take up the rest of the time. That means that on an average day each character will make two **Fatigue** checks against heat.

Some parties may wish to try to travel at night to avoid the brutal crimson sun, which has both advantages and disadvantages. The primary advantage is that travel at night avoids the need for checks against the Heat hazard. However, there are several disadvantages. Each check is affected by Illumination penalties as follows: If both Ral and Guthay are full, the night is bright enough to see normally with no penalty. If neither moon is visible at all, the night is Dark. In all other circumstances the night is Dim. In addition, the nights on Athas can be frigid; each night of travel the party must make one **Fatigue** check versus the **Cold Hazard**. Lastly, predators of all kinds are more active at night; when Drawing for Encounters for each night of travel, all Spades (not just face cards) result in an encounter.

Navigation: This Critical Task must be done first in order to provide direction. Once per day, the Navigator rolls *Survival*. If traveling along trade roads, this check is made at +2.

- Success: The party is headed in the right direction. No extra effect.
- Raise: **Lookout** and **Overcoming Obstacle** tasks today get a +1 bonus.
- Failure: The party makes no headway today.
- Critical Failure: The party heads in the wrong direction and becomes lost. All future Navigation rolls are made at a -2 penalty until a Raise is gained, which allows the party to get back on track. In addition, the party fails to find adequate shelter from the hottest sun of the day (or coldest winds of the night), resulting in a -4 penalty to today's **Fatigue** checks against Heat (or Cold).

Lookout: The lookout makes a *Notice* check each day to spot threats to the travelers.

- Success: Draw for Encounters as normal.
- Raise: The party cannot be ambushed by a random encounter, though still draw as normal.
- Failure: The GM draws the Encounter in secret, and if an encounter is drawn, the GM begins it without the travelers' knowledge.
- Critical Failure: As a Failure, plus Foraging and Scouting tasks today are made at -2, and if the party is surprised, they have a -2 to their Notice checks to be dealt in on the first round.

Overcoming Obstacles: Many terrain features of the desert are surprising and deadly; helping everyone tread silt, scale cliffs, or escape pitfalls is a part of travel. Whoever oversees this task rolls *Athletics* each day. If traveling along trade roads, this is made at +2.

- Success: The party avoids major disaster.
- Raise: Terrain features can also provide shelter or good positioning; Foraging and Scouting checks made today get a +1 bonus.
- Failure: Over the course of the day, various natural obstacles have inflicted one level of **Fatigue** from **Bumps & Bruises** to each member of the party.
- Critical Failure: As per Failure, plus some sort of more major disaster occurs. Each traveler must roll **Agility** at -2 or suffer a **Wound** and associated **Injury**.

Foraging: If sufficient supplies aren't being carried by the party, they may have to find their own food. The desert doesn't give up its treasures easily, so this *Survival* check can mean life or death for the party. Trade roads are already picked clean, so this check may not be made when traveling along them. Note that other characters may **Support** this check, but they can't make their own – the desert has little to offer, and more people looking doesn't make more food and water appear.

- Success: The forager finds enough food for 5 Size 0 or Size -1 creatures. Each Size bigger a creature is doubles their requirements; a Size 1 creature takes up two humans' worth of supplies, a Size 2 creature takes 4 humans' worth, and so on. Size -2 creatures and smaller require one humans' worth of supplies for each half dozen of them there are.
- Raise: Double the amount of food found, plus enough water for one Size 0/-1 creature.
- Failure: No supplies are found. If the party does not have any reserve supplies, they make their Fatigue Checks against Hunger and/or Thirst.
- Critical Failure: The party ingests something diseased or poisonous. They gain no benefit from food or water intake today and must immediately begin their Hunger and Thirst Fatigue checks, plus gain a level of Fatigue from disease for the next 2d6 days.

Scouting: It's generally wise to try to avoid meeting other creatures in the desert, as friends are rarer than water. If a party wants to keep to themselves, someone needs to roll *Stealth* to scout ahead and inform the party of potential dangers.

- Success: The party is forewarned. Draw for Encounters as usual, but the party gets advanced notice and can plan or try to avoid accordingly.
- Raise: As Success, plus the party can draw two cards for Encounters and choose one.
- Failure: The GM draws Encounters as normal but if a hostile enemy is encountered, the encounter starts with the Scout isolated and **Surprised!**
- Critical Failure: As per Failure, plus the GM draws three times for Encounters!

Handling: The above rules assume that the party is on foot, but they may have mounts or even vehicles. In addition to the concerns of keeping such creatures fed and hydrated, they also must be handled separately. This check is either a *Riding* or *Boating* check, depending on whether the party is traveling with a caravan or using a Sand Barge/Silt Skimmer or the like.

- Success: No issues with the mounts or vehicles today; the party benefits from their speed and carrying capacity.
- Raise: The handler makes good time, traveling 50% more distance today.
- Failure: The mounts have a rough day; each gains a level of **Fatigue** from **Bumps & Bruises**. If a Vehicle, it suffers a Wound that must be repaired.
- Critical Failure: Either 1d4 mounts are killed or escape, or each Vehicle suffers 1d4 Wounds (possibly destroying it).

NAVIGATING AN ELVEN MARKET

A well-known fact among the denizens of Athas is that if you want a difficult-to-find herb, a rare metal weapon, a unique piece of gear or even a dangerous secret, you can find it in the nomadic elven markets. In addition to the wide variety of illicit goods and entertainment to be had at an elven market (why they remain so popular even despite the other aspects), elven tribes' strange wanderings put them in contact with all sorts of unusual trinkets that even the great Merchant Houses might not have (the Merchant Houses are largely wholesalers and move trade goods, regardless – they're less likely to sell things to individual buyers). So if you can't find something in the shops of your City-State's market district, you might wander outside those walls and try your luck with the elves.

Elves, without a moment's hesitation, will cheat, rob, and swindle you. If you push too hard, something even worse might happen. Elves are devious, tricky, dangerous warriors who can vanish into the desert if a deal goes sour. They owe no fealty to the laws of any City-State and operate outside the jurisdiction of the Merchant Houses; in other words, they have no accountability to anyone but themselves. They often have things for sale that can be found nowhere else, but buyer beware.

When outsiders first enter the area of an elven market, draw a card to determine a random encounter:

- **SPADES:** Bullies. A group of elves attempts to coerce you into paying for "protection" or an escort through the market. The elves make an *Intimidation Test* (at a d8) against the party's chosen spokesperson, but if the **Test** is successful the party pays the protection money (usually equal to 5d6 ceramic pieces).
- **HEARTS:** Life Sellers. A variety of entertainment, art, alcohol, baubles or other things are for sale, and the elves bark them with great skill. The elves make a *Taunt Test* (at a d8) against a random member of the party, but if the **Test** is successful the party spends 3d6 ceramic pieces on one or more of these fun but ultimately useless things.
- **DIAMONDS:** Gamblers. Elves running street games bark at the shoppers to try their luck. There is one elf for every player who wishes to participate, and they each have d8 in Gambling. The players can actually win money here, but the elves are notorious cheaters (see Gambling rules).
- **CLUBS:** Thieves. The party is the target of an attempted pick pocketing or petty crime. An elf with a d8 in Thievery targets the character who looks like they aren't paying good attention (lowest Notice) and tries to steal whatever they can get. Succeed or fail, the thief then vanishes.
- **JOKER:** Other Traders. The characters encounter other visitors to the elven market. They may be looking for the same item as the characters, interested in causing trouble, selling something to an elven contact, or even be potential allies, as the plot demands.

Once past the initial "welcome," traders can get to the business of searching for what they came here for. To trade with an elf tribe, first use the **Networking** rules, with special modifications as below:

- You may not use the *Intimidation* version of **Networking**. Attempts to intimidate an entire elven tribe either result in your body disappearing into the desert or the elves simply vanishing if they don't think they can win. You have to wheel and deal.

- Showing up with empty pockets means the elves won't think you're worth their time. If you clearly come with no money or nothing to trade, you're viewed as disrespectful and get a -2 to your Networking attempt.
- On a Failure, you're successfully taken by thieves, con artists, or scammers of some kind. A random piece of gear or amount of money roughly equal to half the starting amount is lost.
- On a Critical Failure, you're robbed blind and not even sure what happened. All your coin is gone, as well as one piece of gear from each person in the party.
- On a success, you locate the item or items you want, but you don't automatically get it – now you need to haggle. On a raise or better, you get a +1 to the Hagglng check that follows.

To haggle for the item you wish to buy, use the **Social Conflict** rules. Since you're haggling against someone else, opposed *Persuasion* is used. You'll almost always end up haggling against a dedicated fast talker with a *Persuasion* of d10. Hagglng against an elven nomad is not for amateurs.

Start with a base price for the item or items in question. Since one typically does not venture to an elven market for mundane items, there's no generic price list – the GM will have to determine the base price of the item. Once the elf states their price, the hagglng commences as per the **Social Conflict** rules, with the token results as follows:

- 0 Tokens: You've insulted the elf with lowball offers, accusations of dishonesty, and impugning the quality of the product. Pay 25% more to smooth things over or get lost. If you don't pay up, someone probably attempts to pick your pocket on the way out.
- 1-3 Tokens: Take it or leave it. Pay the price and get the item or don't. If you walk away, you at least do so without harassment if you don't make trouble.
- 4-5 Tokens: Impressive! You bargain with the elves to the point where you get a 25% discount on the base price. Don't linger, though. Elves are sore losers.
- 6+ Tokens: You swindle the swindlers. You either get the item at half price, or you strike some sort of unusual deal, such as trades for non-material goods, wagers or contests, and so on. Elves normally won't consider that sort of thing, but if you're this persuasive they're open to it.



ARENA COMBAT

The arena is central to the society of the City-States. All festivals and important events are celebrated with games and contests in the pits, and each City-State has its own unique features in their main arena. Even when events are not actively taking place, the arena becomes a center of social gathering, and both in and out of the pits themselves fortunes are won and lost. The most famous gladiators may be slaves yet treated like royalty; at the same time, the sands are stained with the blood of the more expendable.

Combat in the arena is unlike normal combat in many ways. While victory is still important, sport and entertainment play a vital role. The frothing crowds love a bloodbath, but they don't want to see a quick, efficient battle. They want *spectacle*. Winning favor in the arena means winning the crowds as well as impressing the overseers of the events, which are often nobles, Templar, or even the Sorcerer-Kings themselves.

Gladiatorial combat includes a special **Dramatic Task** to the battle. Success in this task results in you winning the favor of the crowds or other overseers – and can even happen if you lose the battle! Likewise, a victory in battle but a failure in the **Dramatic Task** can mean you're booed and disliked, which means your victory will be a pyrrhic one. You may find yourself losing your stake at best, or possibly forced into rematches, imprisoned and sold into slavery, or even executed.

For a single combatant to win this task, they must collect 6 tokens in 4 rounds (a Difficult task). A team of combatants must collect 3 tokens times the number of members in 3 rounds. Tokens can be gained in the following ways:

- A hit with a raise that causes at least one Wound (after Soaking) represents an impressive hit with sufficient flourish to impress the audience.
- A successful Test against an opponent gains a token – two if the Test succeeds with a Raise and thus invokes Creative Combat!
- "Firing Up the Crowd" with a successful *Intimidate*, *Persuasion*, *Performance* or *Taunt* roll as an action gains one token per success and raise, but causes you to be **Distracted** after.
- Performing a **Finishing Move** as an action can gain you a token, but only if the overseer of the event has given their approval.
- Lastly, achieving victory before the time has elapsed gains you a token. Conversely, being defeated early *loses* you two tokens from your total!

Regardless of whether the combat itself has been resolved in five rounds, the audience will have been won over or not in that time. Sometimes the grandmaster of the event will call a hold when they sense the crowd's attitudes have shifted and make a decree as to whether to continue the event or possibly make a change, such as releasing a new opponent or monster into the fray!